SAMUIL FEINBERG: AN EVOLUTION OF STYLE

by

Sean Cavanaugh

Submitted to the faculty of the
Jacobs School of Music in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree,
Doctor of Music
Indiana University
December 2019

Accepted by the faculty of the
Indiana University Jacobs School of Music,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Music

Doctoral Committee

_____
Karen Shaw, Chair

_____
Evelyne Brancart

_____
Norman Krieger

Dedicated to Edmund Battersby,

who taught me that good performers have an obligation to be good scholars.

Thank you, Teacher.

And to Karen Shaw,

who taught me that good performers need to perform well.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank many people who helped me along my journey with Feinberg. First, I wouldn't have been able to accomplish this project without the countless resources available to me through Indiana University, the Cook Library, and many interlibrary loans. One of the most difficult aspects of this project was the fact that many of my sources are in Russian, a language I do not speak. I owe a thank you to Lydia Melnikov for her help translating when translation tools failed.

To the members of my doctoral committee, Evelyne Brancart – for coming to all my recitals, thank you. And to Norman Krieger, for agreeing to step in once professor Battersby passed away.

I wouldn't have been able to complete this project without the love and support of my friends and family, who I'm sure are tired of hearing me talk about this obscure Russian composer…

To my former teacher Read Gainsford: I heard Read play one of Feinberg's sonatas many years ago and I've been hooked ever since. Thank you for your guidance and friendship over the many years.

I owe a huge debt of thanks to David Cartledge, who was so helpful when my teacher, Karen Shaw was in the hospital and her subsequent passing.

And finally, to my teacher Karen Shaw, who joined me on this journey with Feinberg, along with so many other journeys over the years. I was extremely fortunate to have your incredible instruction and support through the many years of my graduate studies, and you will always have my most profound love and gratitude. Rest in peace, Doc.

Table of Contents

List of Examples

Chapter 1: Life and Legacy

Early Years

Samuil Yevgenevich Feinberg was born to poor Jewish parents in 1890 in Odessa. His mother, Anna Akimovna could speak French and Russian, and was well-educated in Russian literature. His father Yevgeny Illich Feinberg studied at the Odessa law school and spent a year of their engagement in solitary confinement for possession of banned literature. Being sympathetic to the poor and destitute, his father had democratic tendencies his whole life. Samuil was the second of three Feinberg children: his elder sister Bella was born in 1888, and his younger brother Leonid in 1896.

His father Yevgeny specialized in transportation tariffs, which allowed him to act in an advisory capacity to several companies and provide for the family. It was not extremely profitable, but it allowed them to live comfortably. Yevgeny moved the family to Lutz in 1891, and again to Moscow in 1894. Some of Samuil's earliest musical inspirations came from the sounds of pipe organ in Lutz and brass bands in Moscow.

Neither of his parents were musicians, but they welcomed music in the house. When Samuil's older sister Bella wanted to start taking piano lessons, they acquired a piano and found her a teacher in Moscow. According to his parents, after each of his sister's lessons, Samuil (then age 5) would go to the piano and play all the pieces she was studying by ear. His parents realized Samuil had perfect pitch, and he soon began taking lessons with Bella's teacher, Sofya Abramovna Gurevich, a graduate of the Moscow Conservatory. By age 10, his parents realized he needed a more serious teacher, so he began working with Alexander Feodorovich Jensen, a pupil of Mortiz Moskovsky. Jensen gave professional lessons and took Feinberg's development seriously. The bulk of Jensen's lessons focused on Bach, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven. Jensen also played quite a bit of 4-hand music with Samuil. Feinberg recalls his early lessons with Jensen:

> When I started studying with Jensen, it was already thought that I was obviously going to be a musician. But my parents never overestimated my ability. This was a serious attitude. They tried everything that was necessary in the field of music, I was given: tickets for concerts, notes, and instrument. I remember we had a good grand piano, Schroeder. The expenses were quite large, and this represented some difficulties for my parents. However, everything was done in order to bring up a real musician.[1]

It was through Jensen that Feinberg was first exposed to several pianists, including Eugen d'Albert, Alfred Reisenauer, Josef Hoffman, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, and Medtner. Jensen often arranged house concerts which Feinberg would regularly attend, exposing him to swathes of music. Occasionally Feinberg was invited to play 4-hand music with Jensen on some of these programs, and eventually he would allow him to play solo piano music. Jensen was careful to introduce Chopin after a few years of study of the Classics and presented Feinberg with a complete collection of Chopin works when he was thirteen. After only four short years with Jensen, Feinberg (then aged 14) had played several Beethoven sonatas, some of Chopin's works, Liszt's Sixth Hungarian Rhapsody, and several Tchaikovsky pieces.

Jensen also cultivated an early appreciation for composition in young Feinberg. Even before his parents brought him to study with Jensen, Feinberg had already began experimenting in composing, his earliest attempts through improvisation. He would improvise short tone poems at home for his sister Bella. Jensen fostered a more serious approach to composing and would encourage him to begin studying theory and composition, and recommended Feinberg begin to practice reading open-score string quartets at the piano.[2]

Moscow Conservatory

In 1904, with Jensen's approval, Feinberg began to study piano at the Moscow Conservatory with Alexander Goldenweiser. Goldenweiser was an important pedagogue at the Conservatory, and had several

[1] Viktor Bunin, *Samuil Evgen'evich Feĭnberg: Zhizn' i Tvorchestvo,* (Moscow: "Muzyka", 1999), 8.
[2] Ibid., 9.

other significant pupils, including Grigory Ginzburg, Dmitry Kabalevsky, Nikolai Petrov, Rosa Tamarkina, Lazar Berman, Nikolai Kapustin, and several others. Goldenweiser focused his class on the music of other Russian composers, and it was in his class that Feinberg first heard many works of Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, and Medtner for the first time, many of which Goldenweiser would play himself. Feinberg once recalled a vivid memory of Goldenweiser playing Scriabin's Ninth and Tenth sonatas soon after the composer's death, which seemed to warmly recall the "charm of Scriabin pianism."[3]

Feinberg's early studies with Goldenweiser continued his emphasis on the Classics, and he tended to avoid the music of Chopin and Liszt. It wasn't until years later when he studied the B Minor Sonata that he would fully appreciate Liszt's work. The same was with Wagner's music: initially describing Wagner's music to be in "bad taste", later in life he was reported to be able to sing all of Wagner's operas "cover to cover" while accompanying himself at the piano.[4]

Feinberg's earliest serious attempts at composition came from his early years with Goldenweiser. Goldenweiser was unusually strict with Feinberg, and he tried to instill an appreciation for composition over improvisation. Feinberg brought many of his early compositions to Goldenweiser, including a Nocturne and Etude, 2 Piano Preludes, and a Sonata in F-sharp minor with 3 movements (Moderato – Andante – Agitato). He performed this early sonata for a house concert at the Feinberg house in 1909.

Meanwhile, Samuil's father fell into gambling problems, which created problems in the Feinberg home. His mother Anna threatened to take the children in a divorce. Sadly, in 1906, although he did not divorce Anna, Yevgeny abandoned the family by accepting a tariff supervisor position in St. Petersburg. He would send occasional money to the family, and visit every few years, but largely disappeared from the family when Samuil was only sixteen years old. Samuil was forced to take on several pupils to help support his mother and the family.

[3] Ibid., 11.
[4] Ibid., 11-12.

In 1911 Feinberg met Anatoly Alexandrov, a fellow pianist-composer at the Conservatory. Together they had many conversations about art, literature, and philosophy, and formed a friendship that would last the rest of their lives. Alexandrov described Feinberg's playing as very nervous: he would grind his teeth and sighed heavily while playing, almost to the point of being laughable. Although he greatly respected Feinberg's playing, he found his music incomprehensible.[5]

Alexandrov recommended Feinberg study theory and counterpoint with his teacher, Sergei Taneyev. However, Taneyev was extremely critical of Scriabin's late pieces, works which Feinberg greatly respected. Alexandrov writes in his memoirs that once Scriabin's Op. 52 (3 Piano Pieces) arrived in Moscow, Taneyev began to play through them in front of his class, stopped, flipped the book over and continued to play the pieces upside-down, commenting that the pieces weren't so bad! Feinberg was rightfully hesitant to study with Taneyev and refused to show him his own compositions for fear of criticism. Feinberg eventually abandoned attempts to study with Taneyev, and it was probably Taneyev who sent him to Nikolai Zhilyayev instead. Zhilyayev was known for being very welcoming of contemporary music and welcomed innovation in new compositions. Zhilyayev's composition class emphasized new music, and he was especially fond of Scriabin, Debussy, and Grieg.[6]

1911 was Feinberg's final year at the Conservatory, and a year with several immense recital obligations. He took part in a Nikolai Rubinstein tribute concert, performing Beethoven's Op. 111 and two movements from Chopin's E Minor Concerto. It was also the year of his graduation recital from the Conservatory, which was to consist of all 48 preludes and fugues of Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier from memory, becoming the first Russian pianist to perform this incredible feat. However, due to a logistical rule which stated that graduation recitals must be played within 2-3 months of the graduation date, Feinberg was forced to prepare yet another recital. This graduation recital consisted of a Handel Concerto (arranged by August Stradal), A Mozart Adagio, Chopin's C Minor Nocturne, Scriabin's Fourth Sonata,

[5] Ibid., 16.
[6] Ibid., 17.

and Rachmaninoff's newly composed Third Piano Concerto. Goldenweiser strictly adhered to this rule, so Feinberg was forced to play the second recital.[7]

To pave the way for his post-Conservatory career, Feinberg unfortunately destroyed all his early compositions, including the Sonata in F-sharp minor, the 2 Preludes, and the Nocturne and Etude. He also destroyed posters, program, reviews, and records of his performances, insisting that he could always do better. These were some of the first acts of a lifetime of self-sabotage which led to his inevitable demise. This tendency to self-sabotage extended into his personal life as well: he disliked being photographed, did not keep a diary, and was inclined to destroy many personal items. He believed that self-promotion was degrading, and that great art would speak for itself. He believed that any form of praise marked the limit of achievement, and therefore marked the end of the creative process.[8] His refusal to promote himself or his compositions, combined with the complexities and extreme technical demands of his early compositions invited accusations of elitism, a curse which haunted much of his early career as a composer.

Early Pianistic Career

Following his graduation from the Conservatory, Feinberg set out on a performing career in Russia and abroad. He made two trips abroad in 1913, first to Berlin and then to Vienna. The main reasons for these trips were to take lessons and establish relationships with famous pianists – he intended to meet Busoni, Schnabel, Frederic Lamond, and Godowski. His teacher Goldenweiser attempted to arrange a meeting with Busoni for him, but unfortunately Busoni was playing concerts in Italy and the meeting never took place. However, he was able to meet with Schnabel and Lamond, although Feinberg seemed to have kept accounts of the meetings to himself.

[7] Ibid., 19-20.
[8] Ibid., 20-24.

It was during this time that Feinberg also set out to reinvent his technical approach to the piano and try to remove certain nervous quirks from his playing, including his heavy breathing and grunting. His colleague Alexandrov said that upon his graduation, Feinberg's playing began to take shape as he was able to eventually play with a new sense of refinement and ease. Upon his return to Moscow, Goldenweiser was struck with Feinberg's newly found lack of tension and ease of playing, a freedom which Feinberg attributed to his compositional work. Years later, Goldenweiser would confess in his diary (1926):

> The phenomenal gift of Feinberg never ceases to amaze me. His mental organization and technical stills are really phenomenal. . . Feinberg plays like a devil. . . His fabulous talent strikes me fresh each time. . . Musically his brain works significantly better than mine, and I always have the feeling that I am behind him.[9]

In February of 1914 Feinberg held his widely publicized debut in Moscow, offering the complete Well-Tempered Clavier three times in the main hall of the Conservatory. The concerts were a huge success, and were very well attended, with several notable attendees, including Prokofiev.[10] Reviews for the three concerts were very positive, and he was immediately considered to be one of the greatest and most original pianists in Moscow.[11]

Following his successful debut, Feinberg had a few other concert engagements, but his success was short-lived. When the war broke out only a few months later, he was drafted as a soldier (given the rank of Corporal) and sent to the Polish front.[12] Military life was difficult for Feinberg; not being an especially social person, personal relationships were difficult to form, and the physical demands of military service took quite the toll on him. Unfortunately, within a year of service while en route to the front, he contracted Typhus and was evacuated, eventually to a military hospital near Moscow. He was given six months of leave to recuperate before he needed to report back to a medical commission for

[9] Dmitry Paperno, *Notes of a Moscow Pianist*, (Portland, Oregon, Amadeus Press, 1998), 128.
[10] Bunin, 29.
[11] M. D. Sokolova, *Samuil Feĭnberg, 1890-1962,* (Moscow: Moskovskai͡a konservatorii͡a, 2011), 11.
[12] Bunin, 31.

evaluation. However, he contracted typhoid fever in a medical barracks, and his recovery in Moscow was extended indefinitely.[13]

It was during these uncertain times of illness that Feinberg managed to create some of his earliest-surviving and most successful compositions. The first three piano sonatas come from the time immediately upon his return to Moscow (1915-16). Feinberg perhaps saw his return to Moscow as a chance to restart his composing career, and he assigned the sonatas his first three Opuses. The year 1915 was also significant for Feinberg for another reason – it was the year that Scriabin died. One of Feinberg's earliest idols, Scriabin's death left a deep impression on Feinberg, inspiring him to focus intensely on his own work.[14] Feinberg also resumed his meetings with his former composition teacher, Nikolai Zhilyayev, with whom he met regularly for creative discussions, and who helped to oversee his works. The two would form a close relationship, and Zhilyayev would later act as editor to Feinberg's compositions before they went to publication.

Feinberg also spent much of his time back in Moscow expanding his pianistic repertoire; it was around this time that he set out to learn the several large works, including the sonatas of Schumann, Chopin, and several large Beethoven sonatas, including the *Hammerklavier*.[15] Although his return to Moscow was productive, home life was difficult: he moved back in with his mother and siblings, and although he was himself still recovering from illness, Feinberg needed to take on several private students to help pay rent in their large Moscow apartment.[16]

Once fully recovered, Feinberg was able to quickly step back into the performing career which he left behind before the war. He accepted an invitation to teach at the Moscow Conservatory in 1922, where alongside his former teacher Goldenweiser and Heinrich Neuhaus, is considered one of the founders of the modern Russian piano school.[17] Several accounts of interactions with him at the Conservatory reveal a

[13] Irina Likhacheva, *S.E. Feĭnberg: Pianist, Kompositor, Issledovatel',* (Moscow: Sovietskiy kompozitor, 1984), 5.
[14] Robert Rimm, *The Composer-Pianists: Hamelin and the Eight*, (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 2002), 99.
[15] Bunin, 32.
[16] Sokolova, 12.
[17] Rimm, 85.

modest, warm-hearted man who treated both colleagues and students alike, no matter their position in life. He once summed up his teaching mantra as: "Artistry and mastery are indispensable. Moreover, I cannot imagine the development of the mastery separately and independently from the integrity of the artistic personality. Likewise, it is impossible to imagine real artistry without a foundation of broad knowledge."[18] Stories abound of his deep affection for his students and genuine interest in their development as both musicians and as people. According to one of his students, Boris Lvov, he once presented Lvov with a wad of money to help support his living expenses so that he could focus his energy on studying for his graduation exam full-time.[19] Feinberg would remain on faculty at the Conservatory the remainder of his life, inspiring scores of young pianists.

His early compositions began to receive some notoriety as his technically demanding and complex works began to stand out. The French-born American pianist and critic Carl Engel discovered Feinberg's music when visiting Russia in 1924, writing in *The Music Quarterly*:

> The most personal physiognomy in this group is that of Samuel Feinberg. His is a strong talent. Perhaps he has genius. His two Phantasies for piano (op. 5, 1917 and op. 9, 1919) are the concentrated essence of a deeply musical soul. At the opening of the first Phantasy the shifting cross relations are like the swaying of misty veils. Harmonic freedom and contrapuntal ease attain their last degree within the bourns of discipline and rigorous form. . . Feinberg's Fourth Sonata for piano (written in 1918, published last year) strikes me as a magnificent work. Here is a man of fertile invention and abundant technic. His modernity does not hang in the air, it rests on a rock.[20]

Feinberg's performing career flourished in the 1920s when he was concertizing regularly in Russia and made three trips abroad for European concert tours in 1925, 1927, and 1929. The 1925 tour was at the invitation of the International Festival of Contemporary Music to perform in Venice where his Sixth Sonata aroused great interest. He also stopped in Paris on this tour and was met with positive reviews. On these tours, he played almost exclusively the works of contemporary Russian composers –

[18] Mark Fuksman, "The Toll of Time: Samuil Feinberg's Sonata No. 6." (DMA diss., Arizona State University, 2010), 19.
[19] Rimm, 85-86.
[20] Carl Engel, "Views and Reviews." (*The Musical Quarterly* 10, no. 4, 1924), 630.

Medtner, Prokofiev, Myaskovsky, Alexsandrov, and many of his own pieces. His 1927 tour took him to Berlin, Frankfurt, Leipzig, and Hamburg. In Hamburg he had a very successful performance of Prokofiev's newly composed Third Piano Concerto (which he had the honor of the Russian premiere in Moscow, 1925) which brought he and Prokofiev much acclaim. He also had two live radio appearances in Berlin and Munich (one of the first artists to ever do so),[21] and made recordings for Deutsche Grammophon.[22] On his third tour in 1929 again to Germany, he not only programed contemporary Russian composers, but also included many Western composers, including his own transcriptions of Bach and sonatas of Beethoven.[23] The 1920s were also the most productive years of his life. He composed at a feverish rate, completing five more sonatas, two fantasies, and several smaller sets of pieces before the decade's end while maintaining his impressive concert schedule.

Stalin and Politics

Following the successful tours of the 1920s, he was seen in parts of Europe as one of the greatest pianists of his day, however, his career was stifled largely due to Stalin's rise to power and the restrictions placed upon Soviet artists. Beginning in the early 1930s Feinberg, like all other artists, was restricted from leaving the country, so he was not permitted to tour outside of Russia again. Likewise, his highly complex compositions did not fall in line with the 'social realism' movement of music to be understood by the masses. Feinberg, perhaps out of fear, stopped playing his own pieces in public and stopped composing sonatas around this time. His compositions from the 1930s were tailored to be more accessible to a wider audience – They were smaller in scale, less complex, and more approachable. He redirected the bulk of his compositional efforts to focus on vocal music and transcriptions and away from larger works like sonatas. Later in life he would regret not devoting enough time to composing:

[21] Likhacheva, 18.
[22] Solomon Eichner, "The Life and Legacy of Samuil Feinberg." (DMA diss., University of South Carolina, 2017), 8.
[23] Sokolova, 18.

> I have moments when I regret that I gave too much to performing . . .Unfortunately my creative work was very often interrupted by difficult responsibilities such as performance goals and teaching – that I was absolutely knocked out from the compositional world. Creative work needs the same cultivation, even more than performing work.[24]

The 1930s were troubling times for Soviet artists. The Moscow Conservatory was the only institution of higher learning in the Soviet Union that was not administered by a Party member. As a result, it was under constant scrutiny. Sadly, his former composition teacher and editor Nikolai Zhilyayev along with fellow composer Mikhail Kvardi fell victim to the 1936-38 purges.[25]

In 1936 Feinberg became the chair of the piano department at the Conservatory. He played several important concerts throughout the decade, including several solo and concerto appearances. He repeatedly performed the Scriabin Concerto and Rachmaninoff's Third, had impressive solo programs which almost all included sonatas of Scriabin, and played two-piano/four-hand recitals with his fellow Conservatory professor (and Chopin Competition prize-winner) Grigroy Ginzburg and Sergei Prokofiev.[26] In 1937-38 he performed another cycle of the complete Well-Tempered Clavier in the Small Hall of the Conservatory, this time over the course of 4 concerts interspersed with several of his own transcriptions of Bach organ works.[27]

Feinberg was granted an exception to travel abroad to serve on the prestigious jury of the 1938 Ysayë Competition (later known as the Queen Elizabeth Competition) in Brussels alongside other panelists Arthur Rubinstein, Robert Casadesus, Ignaz Friedman, Emil von Sauer, and Walter Gieseking. First prize was awarded to Emil Gilels, one of the only Russian artists who Stalin allowed to regularly travel abroad.[28]

---

[24] Rimm, 96.
[25] Amy Neslson, *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia*, (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 243.
[26] Many beautiful reproductions of some of these incredible programs are available in Sokolova's *Samuil Feinberg (1890 – 1962)*.
[27] Bunin, 68 – 69.
[28] Eichner, 8.

His performing career peaked in the 1940-1941 season, when he again performed both the complete Well-Tempered Clavier, as well as the complete 32 piano sonatas of Beethoven all within one year's time. These recitals took place in the Small Hall at the Conservatory and were repeated in Leningrad. The concerts drew huge audiences, sold-out quickly and filled the hall to capacity.[29]

World War II and Later Years

Feinberg didn't manage to escape the horrors of the Second World War. He and his family, along with several of the other important professors and artists of Moscow were first evacuated to the Caucuses just as the Germans were reaching Moscow.[30] Despite the wartime displacement Feinberg managed to continue performing enormous solo programs of Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Scriabin, and repeating the entire Beethoven cycle again. In 1942 the Conservatory professors and their families were relocated again as the Germans advanced, this time to distant Kyrgyzstan. Travel was hard and living conditions were very difficult, all of which seemed to take their toll on Feinberg's health. While displaced during the war, he began to suffer heart attacks, which would unfortunately plague him for the rest of his life thereafter.[31]

Feinberg resumed composing seriously again in 1939 just before the war reached Moscow with his Ninth Piano Sonata. The sonata is his first major work from his middle period, and features several of the characteristics of his new style (to be explored in chapter 3). While displaced in Kyrgyzstan, his brother managed to acquire him a piano, and he was able to work on his Tenth Piano Sonata (1943-46). This dark piece is viewed by some scholars as his reaction to the war.[32] Finally, not long after the war came the publication of his very successful Second Piano Concerto, Op. 36 which won him the illustrious Stalin Prize of 1946.[33]

---

[29] Sokolova, 25-29.
[30] Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 175.
[31] Bunin, 86-88.
[32] Ibid., 88-89.
[33] Sokolova, 29.

Unfortunately, the immediate post-war successes wore off: in 1948 the Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU on music formalism, which criticized several Soviet composers, branded Feinberg's Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Piano Sonatas as having "extreme subjectivism of the musical language." His Third Piano Concerto, Op. 44 was also given a harsh formalist assessment. As a result, Feinberg was given restrictions on the ability to concertize and record. An arrangement for him to record the complete Beethoven cycle was scrapped, and he was only given the funding to record five sonatas.[34]

In 1951 he suffered another heart attack after playing tennis. This attack left him significantly weaker, and it made returning to composing and performing very difficult. He managed to complete his Eleventh Piano Sonata in 1952 while recovering, along with earlier sketches of an early violin sonata in 1956. These late works represent a synthesis of his middle period style with several elements of his early works.

Feinberg, a tireless worker, worked on improving his playing up until his final days. Toward the end of his life when he was unable to perform publicly, he would be tirelessly practicing or composing at home and recording himself, attempting to improve his playing. He gave his final public performance on April 3, 1956 in the Great Hall of the Conservatory. The program included Bach transcriptions, Scriabin's Fourth Sonata (one of his favorites), the Schumann Humoresque, Chopin Mazurkas, and some of his own works.[35] Although significantly weak, he was found making recordings at home up until the week of his death.[36] He completed his final piano sonata shortly before his death in 1962.

His final years were spent focusing on his students and teaching. He was honored with several ceremonies at the Conservatory by his colleagues and students. Many of his students achieved great successes: Victor Merzhanov tied with Richter to win the All-Union Soviet Piano Competition of 1945.[37] His student Liu Shikun tied for second place in the first Tchaikovsky Competition of 1958 (which Van

[34] Bunin, 95.
[35] Ibid., 105-106.
[36] David Dubal, *The Art of the Piano: its Performers, Literature, and Recordings*, (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co., 2005), 105.
[37] Sokolova, 29.

Cliburn won), and his student and biographer Viktor Bunin took first place in the 1961 All-Russian Piano Competition.[38]

Feinberg continued to suffer repeated heart attacks up until his death in October of 1962. Looking back on his life, he was quoted shortly before his death:

> This may sound a bit paradoxical, but in many ways I feel myself not at the end, but at the beginning of the life path, when in artistic aspirations there is still much unexplored and alluring. What would I like to accomplish on that part of the life path, that which is still left? I would like to write a fourth concerto for piano and orchestra. . . I would like for the melodies of my vocal compositions to be developed into larger, operatic form. . . Yet the most important and urgent, what I have always considered as my immediate duty, to give my students a sense of artistic responsibility before their art, before the highest purpose of music, which more than any other artistic acts, serves to the unity and brotherhood of mankind, peace, and spiritual advancement.[39]

[38] Bunin, 112.
[39] Ibid., 115-16.

Chapter 2: Early Style (1915 – 1932) – the Scriabin Influence

"Feinberg is chiefly a composer of harmonies and rhythms. He is almost no melodist at all."[1]

Feinberg was first and foremost a composer for the piano. Like Chopin and Scriabin, almost his entire output is exclusively dedicated to piano music. However, unlike Chopin we find no overt external inspirations such as the imitation of vocal idioms, and unlike Scriabin there is no megalomaniacal desire to push the boundaries of Art.[2] Yet, Scriabin's music seems to have had the most influence on Feinberg early style, so the comparison is worthwhile.

Both Scriabin and Feinberg composed pieces essentially for themselves to play. However, Scriabin enjoyed a certain amount of acclaim; several other pianists played his music during his lifetime. Feinberg was well-known in Moscow and in certain circles, but his music went largely un-played during his lifetime. The only pianists known to have played Feinberg's music were Heinrich Neuhaus, Grigory Ginzburg, and Mikhail Sokolov.[3] This was partly because Feinberg published his music long after it was composed, and after he had stopped playing it in public. The first two piano sonatas composed in 1915-16, weren't published until 1924. He also never published his Seventh and Eighth Sonatas, which was done by others posthumously. Although several of his known pieces did enjoy notoriety: in 1925 he was invited to present his Sixth Sonata to the International Festival of Contemporary Music in Venice, where it was very well-received. He also unfortunately stopped performing his own music in public around the late 1920s, just as he was starting to gain traction outside of Russia following his European tours. Feinberg's music, therefore, can be viewed as much more personal than that of Scriabin's. Feinberg

[1] Leonid Sabaneyeff, *Modern Russian Composers*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1975), 165.
[2] Ibid., 162.
[3] Johnathan Powell, *After Sciabin: Six Composers and the Development of Russian Music*, (PhD diss., [microfilm manuscript] Cambridge: Cambridge University Library, 1999), 136.

wasn't composing for consumption on a large stage, he was satisfied writing pieces for himself to play, often in private or small salon gatherings.

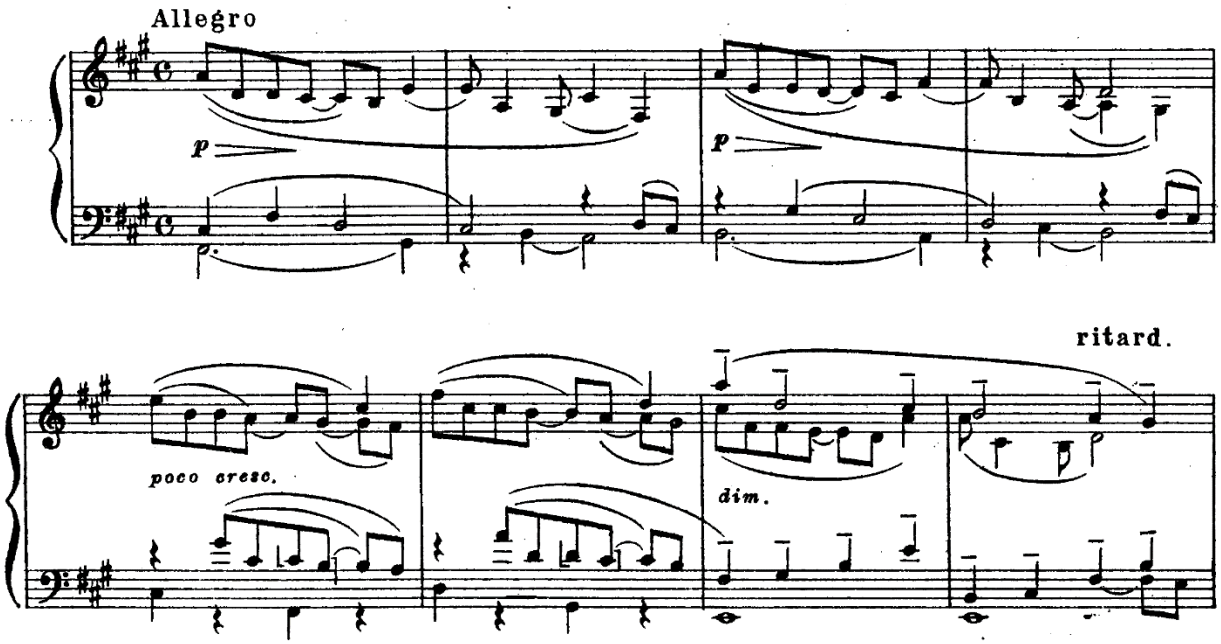
Scriabin was also far more concerned with metaphysics, mysticism, and philosophy whereas Feinberg seemed to be grounded in realism and ethics. Feinberg was very private about his compositional process and avoided speaking about his own works. Therefore, it is difficult to say whether Feinberg's works contain extra-musical influences, like those of Scriabin.[4] However, he hints at extramusical musical influences his book *Pianism as Art*, "I think that a true artist can be characterized above all by his willingness and ability to refract life encounters and experiences, whilst creating a sound image."[5]

Feinberg had the chance to meet and play for Scriabin in 1913, just a few years before composing his early sonatas. Feinberg became one of the few pianists whose playing Scriabin admired. Accounts of Feinberg's playing by his students and colleagues reveal that Feinberg "completely understood the subtle laws of plasticity of rhythm and dynamics," a quality which Scriabin greatly admired. Scriabin had become tired of other pianists attempting to mimic Prokofiev's aggressive, percussive approach and preferred a more fluid, almost impressionistic reading of his music. Ironically, Feinberg would later go on to also become one of Prokofiev's most respected interpreters.[6] However, Feinberg's early works reflect this Scriabinesque plasticity; they are filled with various ritardando and accelerando markings reflective of his and Scriabin's flexibility of tempo and rhythm.

Feinberg's First Sonata shows a striking resemblance to Scriabin's Second Sonata in its use of diatonicism, figuration, and treatment of thematic content. A large amount of the music of the First Sonata is highly diatonic, typically elongating harmonies one per measure with few accidentals if any. This technique is known as pandiatonicism and is often associated with Scriabin's early works.[7] Here,

[4] Powell, 132.
[5] Fuksman, 27.
[6] Rimm, 88.
[7] Powell, 136.

Feinberg uses pitches from the diatonic collection freely without a strong sense of functionality, save for the concluding half cadences; they combine to create a large-scale wash of A Major/F-sharp Minor:

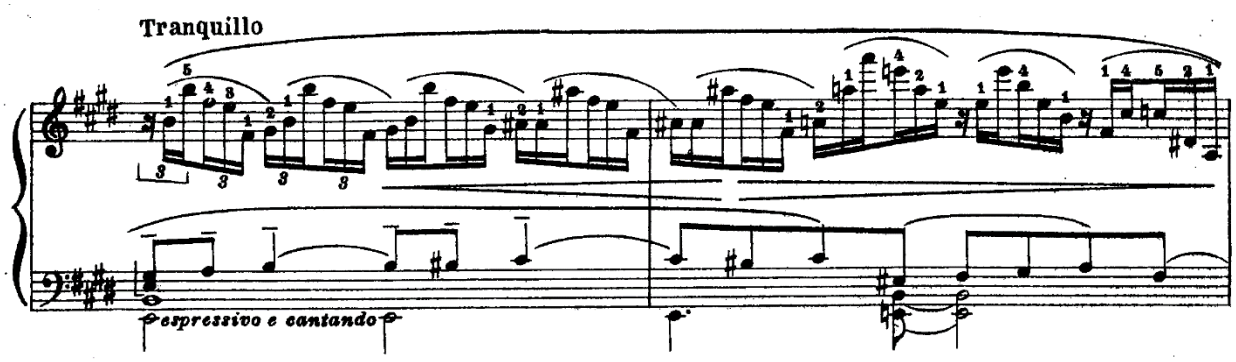


Example 2.1 Feinberg First Sonata, mm. 1 – 8.

Feinberg's music is often highly contrapuntal, as seen in the opening bars above. Throughout his output, but especially in his early style, Feinberg repurposes melodic content as accompanimental figures, essentially creating leitmotivs which blend into the fabric of the often very dense textures (mm. 7-8 above). Some go as far to say that in doing so, Feinberg not only creates leitmotivs, but also leitsonorities, leittimbres, and leittextures.[8] The resulting dense textures are often very orchestral in conception and scope.

[8] Fuksman, 27.

The combination of several of these leitmotivs in effect blurs the line between a traditional sonata form and monothematicism. In the first sonata, Feinberg contrasts the highly diatonic first theme with a highly chromatic second (first appearing in m. 27). The two themes combine before arriving on a decisive E Major iteration of the second theme, now almost completely devoid of chromatic alterations. The rising tenor melody, along with the upper figuration of this passage is reminiscent of the second theme of Scriabin's Second Sonata:

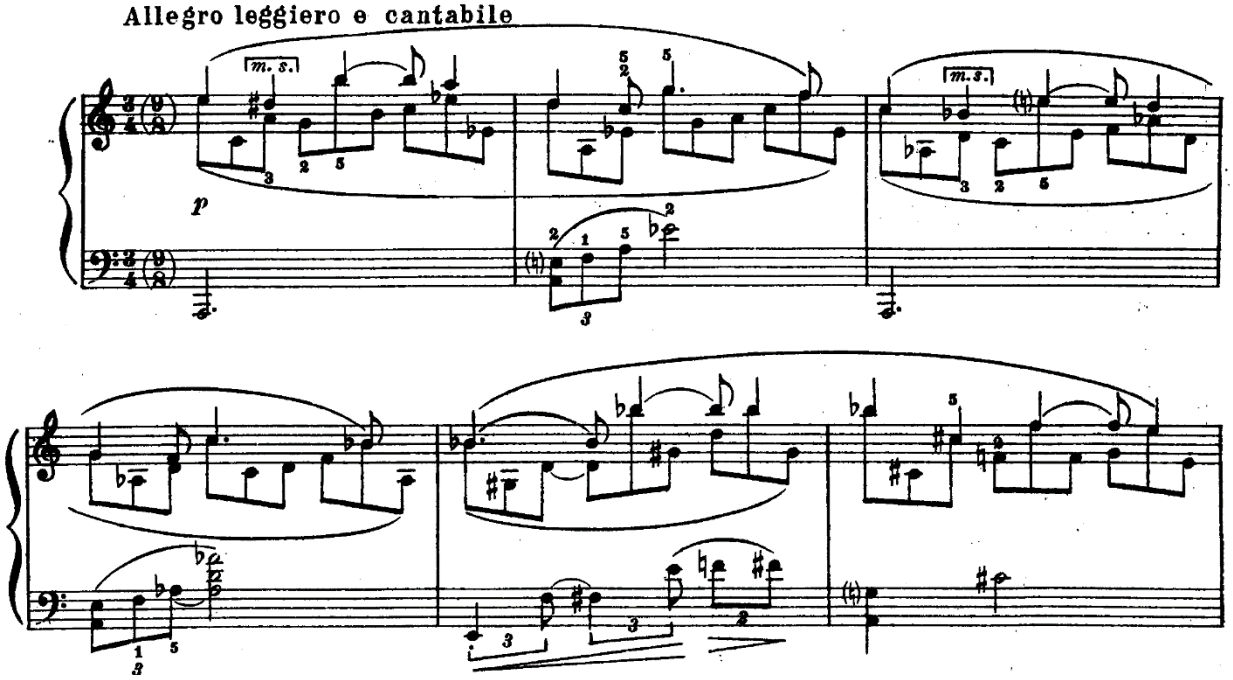


Example 2.2 Feinberg First Sonata, mm. 48 – 49.

Feinberg's Second Sonata follows several of the monothematic principles explored in the first sonata. The piece was conceived at the same time as the first, and the two share a major/minor tonic of A. Feinberg followed the Scriabin model of casting most of his twelve sonatas in a single movement.[9]

[9] The exceptions are his Third, Seventh, Eighth, and Twelfth Sonatas, all of which are in 3 movements.

Like the first sonata, the second begins with an elongated tonic sonority over a pedal, with various altered pitches of the diatonic collection, including in this case a lowered scale-degree 5. Striking is the somber and elegiac character of the Second Sonata, which is unusual in Feinberg's output:[10]



Example 2.3 Feinberg Second Sonata, mm. 1 – 6.

Several markings stand out in the sonata, including *doppio movimento*, *tenereza*, *volando*, and *precipitoso*, all of which seem to be under the influence of Chopin and Scriabin. Much of the music is very idiosyncratic piano writing; passages such as the opening measures' melodic twists and turns create a sense of written-out rubato, akin to perhaps Schumann or Chopin. Later passages which are unambiguously *not* idiosyncratic are used in moments of drama, which help to create a sense of struggle, all of which contribute to the overall romantic sensibility of the work.

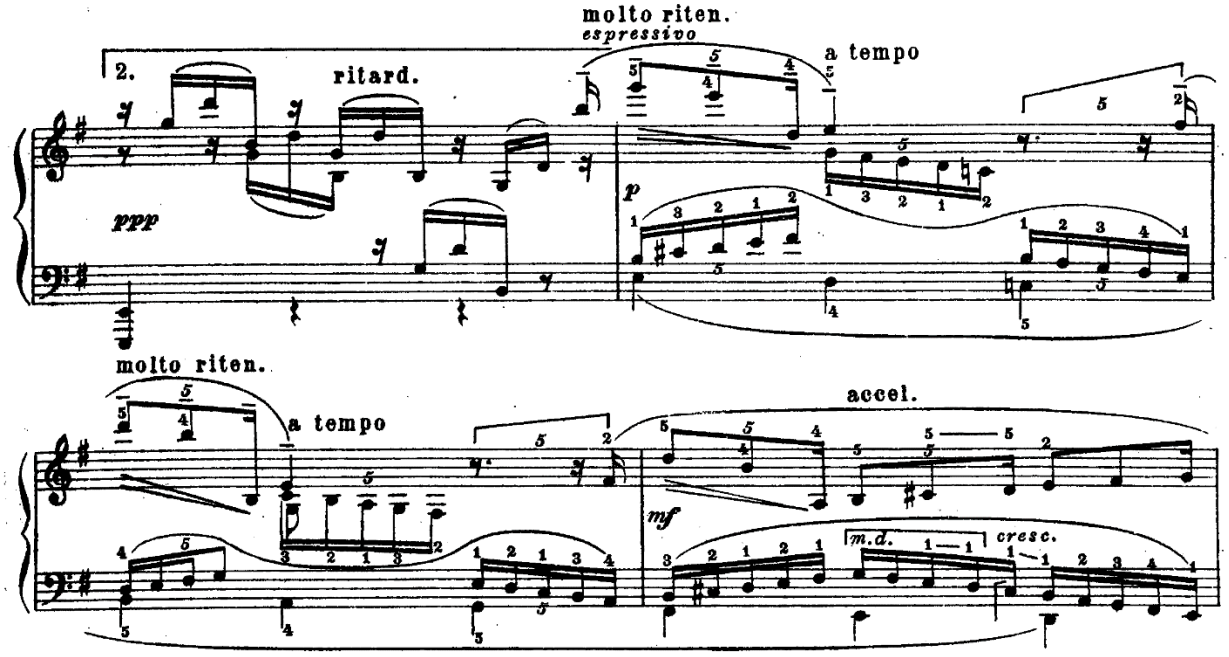
Like the first sonata, it is cast in a single movement, and furthers the composer's exploration of monothematic techniques. Where the first sonata seems to be concerned with the presentation of various leitmotivs within different emotional contexts, the second sonata uses a very limited set of motives which

[10] Likhacheva, 89.

are developed throughout the work, all within the architecture of a traditional single-movement sonata form.

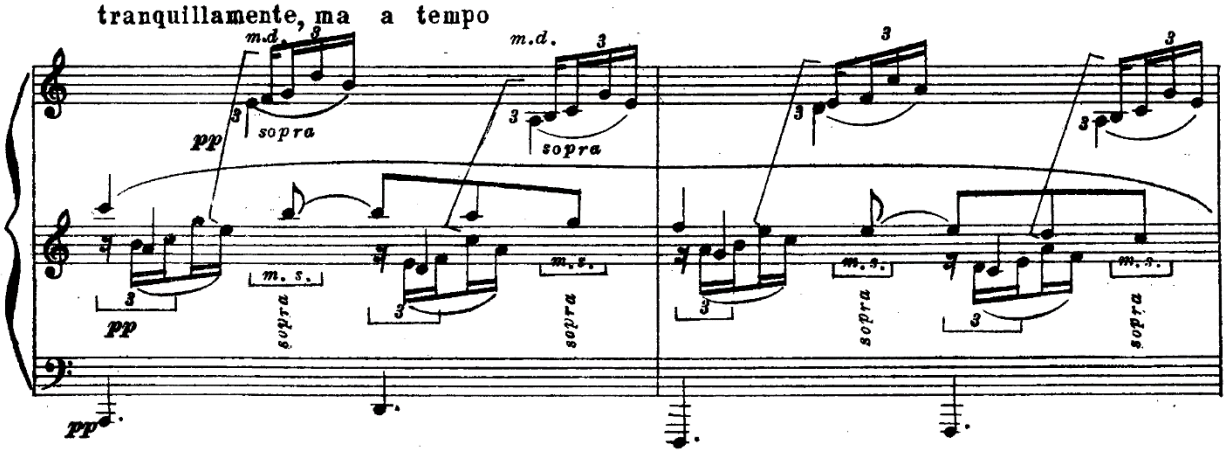
The angular melody of the principal theme dominates the exposition and returns a second time forcefully in E minor (m. 39), affirming the arrival of the dominant key before the conclusion of the exposition. The short-lived G major *carezzevole* theme which appears at the end of the exposition (m. 47) is perhaps an obvious candidate for a second contrasting theme within the exposition, however this theme is fleeting and only appears at the end of large-scale sections. Likewise, the section marked *L'istesso* tempo in m. 29, although appearing in the analogous position of the recapitulation is harmonically unstable, and ultimately leads to the return of the primary material (m. 39).

A much better candidate for contrasting material comes at the onset of the development section in m. 56. This free and flowing quintuplet theme is littered with ritardando and accelerando markings which characterize Feinberg's own unique pianism. The fragmented melody here retains a similar shape to the primary material of the exposition, but is gradually overtaken by the swirling quintuplets, which act as a counterweight to the primary theme:



Example 2.4 Feinberg Second Sonata, mm. 55 – 58.

Perhaps first hinted on the first page (mm. 8 – 12), these quintuplets are themselves developed thoroughly. Feinberg puts them through a series of metric modulations, appearing below as accompanimental triplet + duple sixteenths, and later as groups of eliding upbeat sixteenths over the bar line. Several of these rhythmic alterations again reflect a form of written-out rubato common in Feinberg's music. These measures are another clear example of Feinberg's embrace of pandiatonicism in his early style:

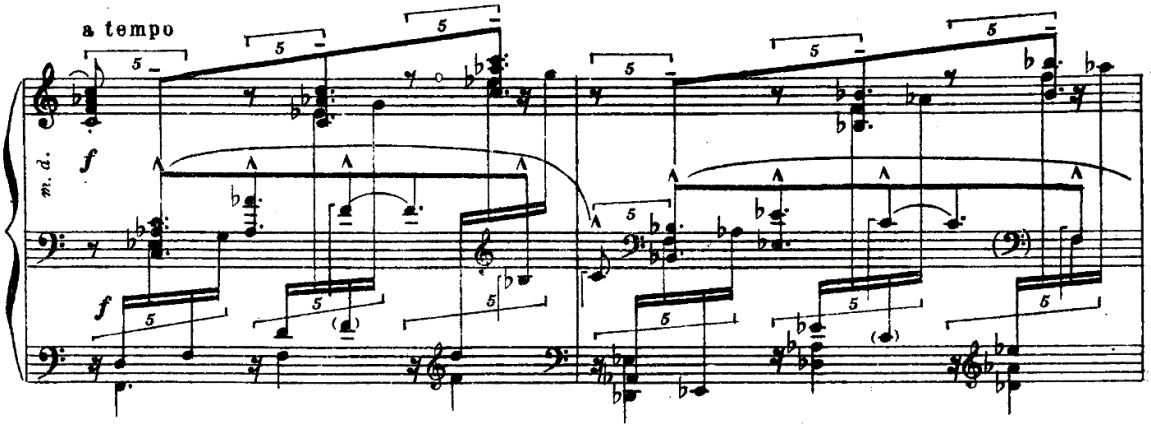


Example 2.5 Feinberg Second Sonata, mm. 92 – 93.

What follows in the recapitulation is akin to the free leitmotiv treatment of themes in the first sonata: the two themes are put through a series of alterations both together and separately, blurring the lines between figures as they pass through several harmonic and rhythmic manipulations. Some scholars have noted Feinberg's similar treatment of thematic material here to Medtner's D Minor Sonata, Op. 11 No. 2.[11] Both Medtner and Feinberg adopt a quasi- "thematic transformation" technique usually associated with Liszt in his monothematic works.

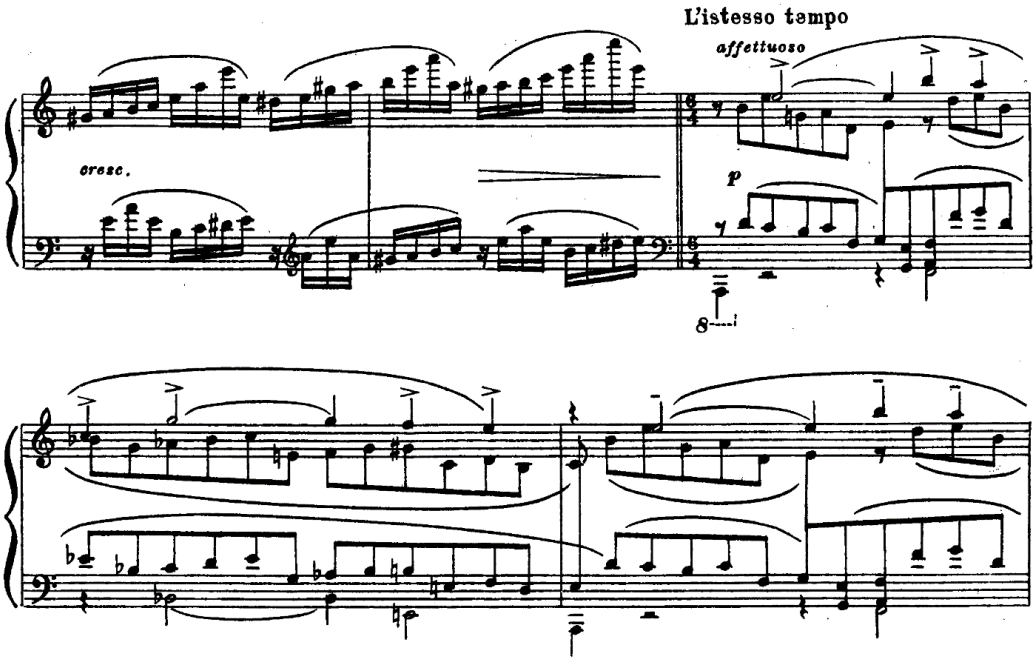
[11] Powell, 139.

As the recapitulation continues the rhythmic intensity of the pieces builds, and the texture becomes more and more dense, building to a climax in m. 137 when the principle theme, now construed within the quintuplets is forced into an extremely dense and frenetic texture very typical of Feinberg's early style, marked here in the middle staff with wedges (^) by the composer:



Example 2.6 Feinberg Second Sonata, mm. 137 – 138.

The coda returns to the simplicity of the opening as the music begins to condense to its original simplicity. The final appearance of the principal theme resembles a Bach chorale prelude, as the fragmented principal theme in the uppermost melody is supported contrapuntally by fragmented remains of the quintuplet figure:

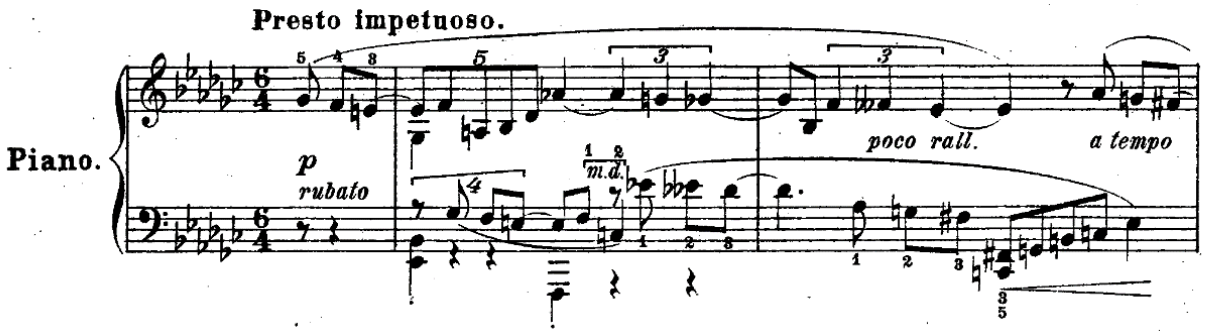


Example 2.7 Feinberg Second Sonata, mm. 151 – 155.

The final three *lento* chords, the only homophonic texture of the entire work, summarize the piece and return to the elegiac atmosphere of the opening. Even in his most complicated works, Feinberg typically ends his works with a return to a strong tonal center.

The Third Sonata is Feinberg's longest sonata, and one of only four of his sonatas in three movements. Like the first two sonatas, the piece shares many commonalities with Scriabin's works. In this case more explicitly with a funeral march slow movement, perhaps reminiscent of Scriabin's First Sonata or Chopin's Second. Feinberg's Third Sonata features several of the same mechanisms as the first two, including generally slow-moving harmonic language with complex and virtuosic figuration above. The Third Sonata is also one of Feinberg's more contrapuntal works, featuring a canon in the first movement and a fugato section in the hefty finale.[12]

The dark and highly chromatic Fourth Sonata features weaving chromatic lines moving polyphonically in cross rhythms over long pedal points in the bass. Much of the music is built upon the falling 3-note chromatic motive first heard in the opening. Feinberg's sense of harmony here is again very linear, and relies on the presto tempo and pedal effects to create waves of sonority formed by the several voices moving independently:



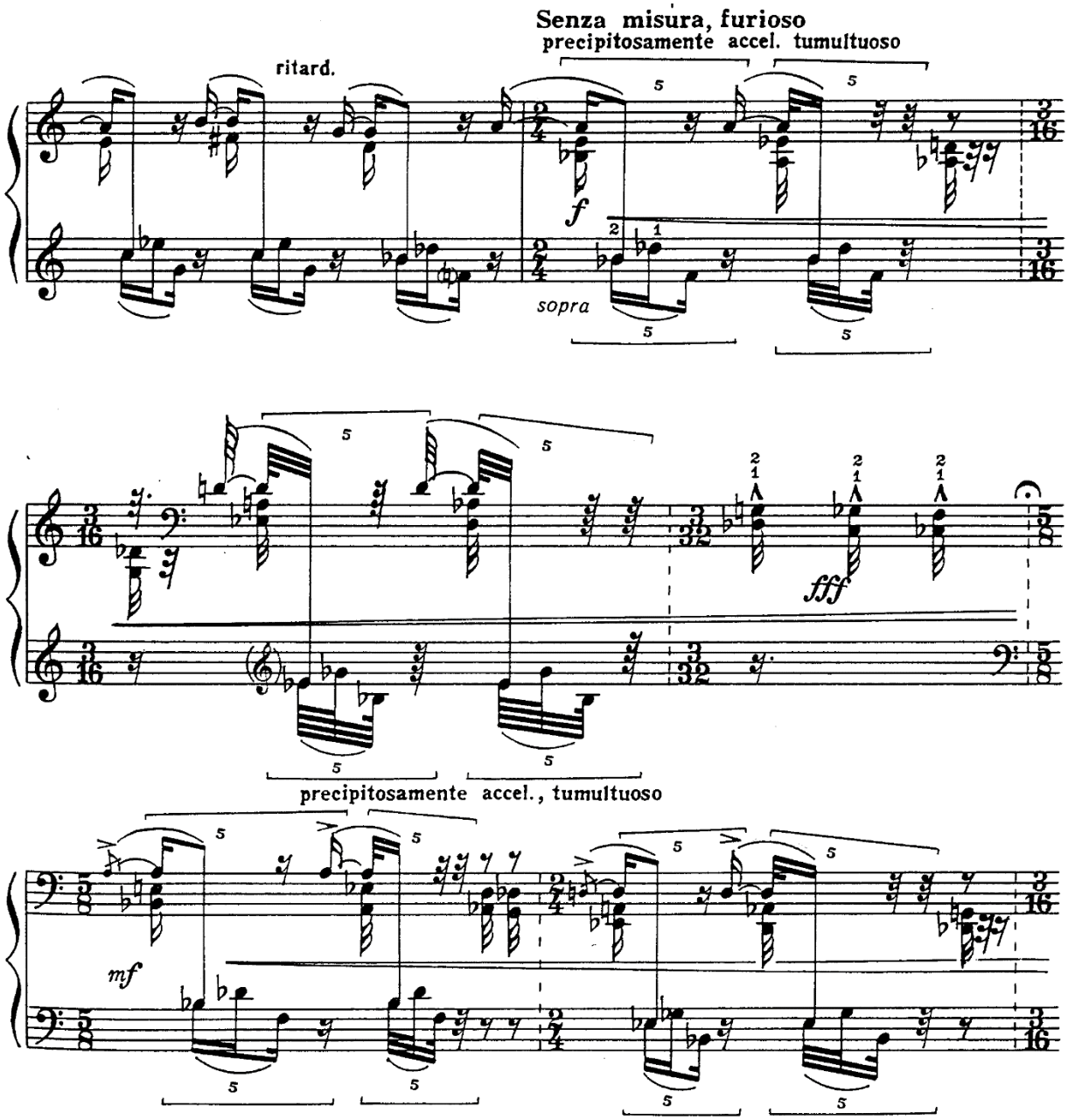
Example 2.8 Feinberg Fourth Sonata, mm. 1 – 2.

[12] Larry Stitsky, *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Guarde, 1900-1929*, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994), 186.

Like many of the late works of Scriabin, melody and meter are set aside in favor of harmonic colorations. However, Feinberg achieves these colors through polyphonic means atypical for Scriabin.[13] The piece also represents one of Feinberg's first ventures into atonal techniques. As the piece progresses, harmony begins to give way to gestural figures derived from the opening chromatic motive, abandoning harmonic considerations altogether. The Fourth Sonata also embodies the late Scriabinesque concept of continuous growth, or movement from "darkness to light" (in this case from E-flat minor toward an F-sharp major climax), reminiscent of Scriabin's *Ver la Flamme*.[14] Here Feinberg's F-sharp major sanguinity is short-lived, as the work returns to the ominous descending motive of the opening and concludes in E-flat minor. With hardly a place to stop and breathe, the piece can also be viewed as a synthesis between some of the motoric elements in much of the music of Prokofiev with the more coloristic of Scriabin.

Feinberg's Fifth Sonata returns to a more traditional approach to sonata form, with more distinctive motives contrasted by tempi and figuration and less development of individual ideas. The development section features passages of interest (marked *Senza misua, furioso*), in which the pianist accelerates indefinitely, abandoning meter through increasingly rapid and highly specific rhythmic notation resembling that of more modern composers:

[13] Peter Deane Roberts, *Modernism in Russian Piano Music: Skriabin, Prokofiev, and Their Russian Contemporaries, Vol. 1*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 27-28.
[14] Powell, 142 – 143.



Example 2.9 Feinberg Fifth Sonata, mm. 64 – 65.

Throughout the Fifth Sonata Feinberg uses figurations to create repetitive patterns which are used as accompanimental textures, some of which resemble similar figurations of Rimsky-Korsakov.[15] The piece also relies heavily on pedal points (like his previous sonatas), over which extensive elaborations

[15] Roberts, 45.

take place. Feinberg employs perhaps some of his most lingering pedal points here, with an extensive G pedal through a retransition arriving at a C minor recapitulation, and again through an extended E pedal over the final three pages of the piece as the energy of the coda dissipates. Although the surface motion of these passages is extensive, Feinberg uses these pedal points to create harmonic stability at moments of structural importance. This pedal point technique shows a departure from the Scriabin model, whose sonatas were arguably more structurally cohesive and rarely relied on pedal points to highlight emphasis.[16]

Feinberg's Sixth Sonata is perhaps the culmination of his early style, and generally considered to be his finest piece of music. As mentioned above, Feinberg was chosen by the International Society of Contemporary Music to represent Russia abroad at the 1925 festival in Venice where the Sixth Sonata was featured and received very well.[17] Feinberg received some acclaim when the piece was highlighted in the Dutch journal *De Telegraaf* in a side-by-side feature next to Stravinsky's Piano Sonata (1924).[18] As a result of the piece's success at the 1925 festival, it was (and still is to this day) the only one of Feinberg's twelve sonatas to be published internationally through Universal Edition.

The Sixth Sonata is also the only piece by Feinberg to which exists a known program, by means of an epigraph appearing on the first page of the piece, evoking the spirit of Schumann.[19] The text from Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* reads:

> ...schauerliche Symbole der rinnenden Zeit,
> deren Tag und Nacht von zahllosen Türmen
> über Westeuropa hinhallende Schläge vielleicht der ungeheuerste Ausdruck sind,
> dessen ein historisches Weltgeföhl überhauptfähig ist.
>
> ...the dread symbol of the flow of time,
> and the chimes of countless clock towers that echo night and day over West Europe are
> perhaps the most wonderful expression of which a historical world-feeling is capable.[20]

[16] Roberts, 101.
[17] Schwarz, 49-50.
[18] Christope Sirodeau, Liner notes to *Feinbergs – Piano Sonatas, Nos. 1-6*. (BIS Records 7318590014134. CD, 2003), 8.
[19] Sabaneyeff, 168.
[20] Fuksman, 34.

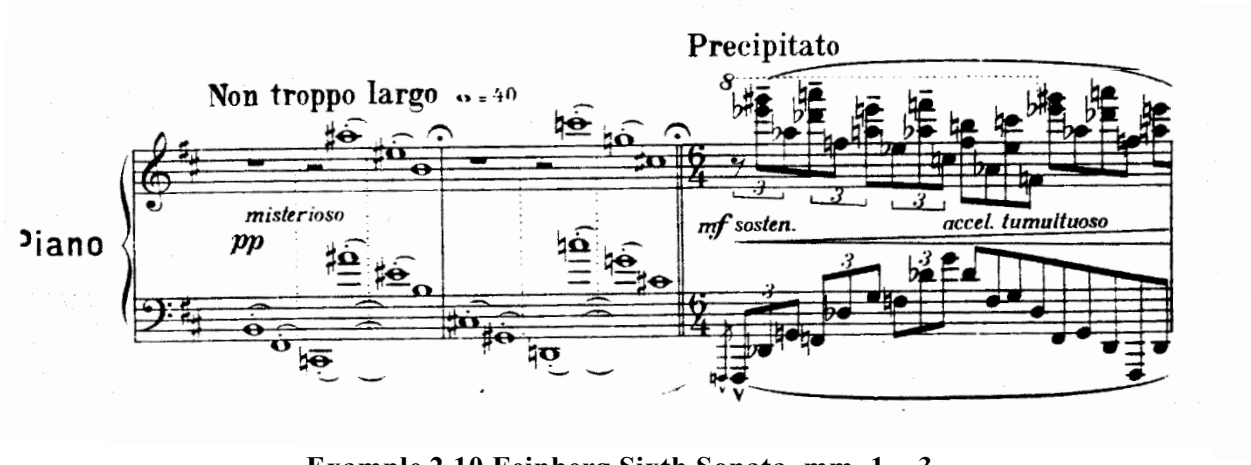
Unfortunately for Feinberg, in the Soviet Union Spengler was branded a fascist in the 1930s and his works were banned, forcing Feinberg to quickly buy out all the remaining copies of the piece in circulation to avoid any unwanted trouble with the authorities. He replaced the Spengler epigraph with the opening two of stanzas of *Insomnia* or *Sleeplessness* by the Russian poet Fyodor Tjutchev:[21]

Часов однообразный бой, Томительная ночи повесть! Язык для всех равно чужой И внятный каждому, как совесть!	A monotonous toll of clocks, A lingering story of the night! It is a language that is foreign And clear to everyone, like a voice of conscience!
Кто без тоски внимал из нас, Среди всемирного молчанья, Глухие времени стенанья, Пророчески-прощальный глас?	Who of us have listened without anguish, In the all-embracing silence, To these obscure moans of time, To this prophetic voice of a farewell?[22]

The piece best resembles the compositional style of late Scriabin more than any of his other works. Feinberg makes uses small motives to represent symbols and create imagery, very much in the manner of Scriabin's mature style, in this case via the tolling of bells (as might be gathered from the epigraphs).[23] The image of clock towers ringing throughout the piece represent the passage of time and timelessness. In using bell symbology, specifically with tritone imitations, Feinberg aligns himself with the Russian nationalist music of Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* and *Pictures at an Exhibition*.[24] The bell references may also draw inspiration from Scriabin's use of bell motives in his Seventh Sonata.[25]

[21] Liudmila Gerogievskaya, "A Performer's Guide to Samuil Feinberg's Sonata No. 6: A Window into Russian Pianism." (DMA diss,. University of North Texas, 2017), 3.
[22] Today's Universal Edition publishes the original Spengler quote, while the Russian Sovietski Kompositor/Muzgiz edition retains the Tjutchev.
[23] James Bakst, *A History of Russian-Soviet Music*, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977), 264.
[24] Fuksman, 33.
[25] Powell, 136-137.

Like his earlier works and the later works of Scriabin, the Sixth Sonata deals with a rather small set of motives which saturate the often-dense textures. Perhaps this piece best exemplifies the "frenzied deployment of small motives" which Feinberg was often known for.[26] The opening bars of the music introduce the *misterioso* bell motives, first heard in falling fourths and tritones, perhaps invoking Liszt's *Dante Sonata*.[27] Interesting are the first of each group of three whole-note patterns, which spell out an extended version of the B-A-C-H pattern, transposed up a half step to begin on B-natural:

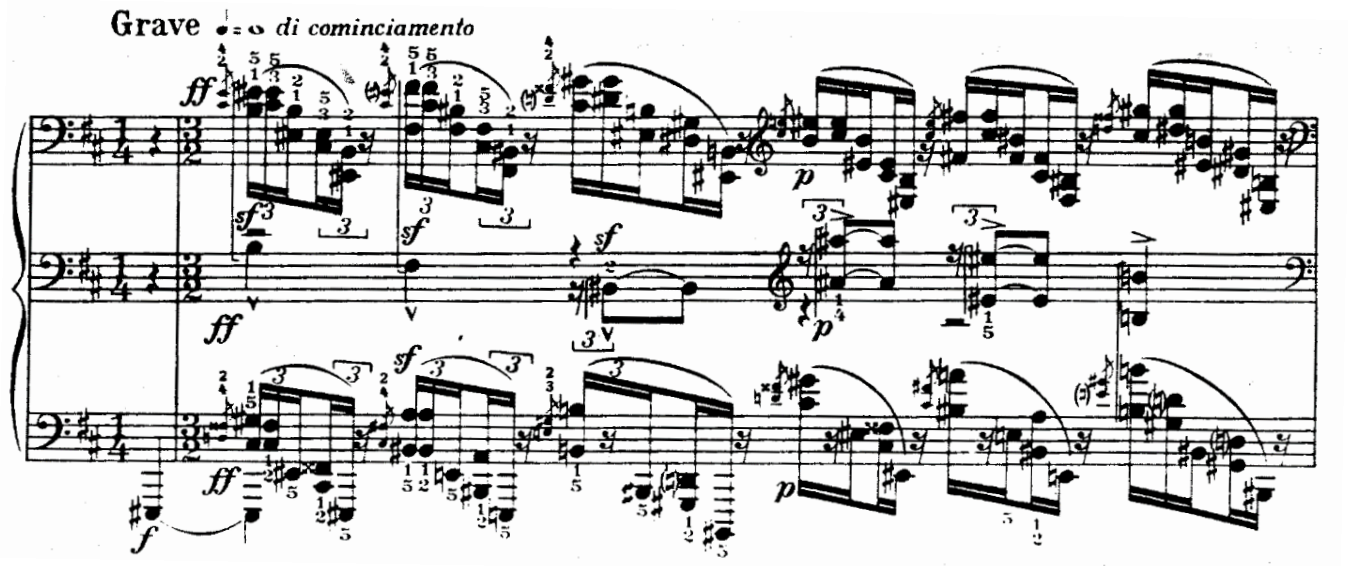


Example 2.10 Feinberg Sixth Sonata, mm. 1 – 3.

Harmonically, the piece epitomizes Feinberg's more most advanced style in which he has moved beyond a traditional sense of tonality, a technique perhaps first explored in his Fourth Sonata. Here, as in the Fourth and Fifth Sonatas, the complex harmonies are non-functional, often atonal, and are created through careful combinations of motives.[28] Following the introduction, the principle theme of the piece is introduced in the bass in the following *Inquieto* section (m. 10); a rising semitone followed by a rising fifth, followed by a descending semitone. This theme too is derivative of the tritones found in the introduction. Just as in Feinberg's early sonatas, it is difficult to label with certainty his second themes and contrasting motifs because almost every note can somehow relate back to the opening material.[29] The piece reaches its first climax in the following *Grave* section, where the descending fourth/tritone leaps

[26] Allan Ho and Dmitry Feofanov, *A Biographical Dictionary of Russian/Soviet Composers*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 142.
[27] Fuksman, 36.
[28] Powell, 149-150.
[29] Ibid., 151.

from the introduction (middle stave) are surrounded by "smaller bell" motives, often appearing in tritones:



Example 2.11 Feinberg Sixth Sonata, m. 13.

The opening fourth/tritone motif of the introduction also has large-scale implications of tonal centers, another feature resembling that of late Scriabin.[30] The large-scale sections of the piece adhere to intervallic content of the opening: the introduction and principal theme are in B minor, the second theme group is in F minor, and the development section is in B-flat minor. The piece reverses the process by ascending through an abridged E minor second theme in the recapitulation, leading to another large F minor section which prepares the B minor coda.[31]

The coda is marked by an extremely powerful *Precipitato sffff* arrival in the home key of B minor, and from then onward undergoes a very steady decline leading to the final *pppp* ending. The piece concludes in a similar manner as the Fifth Sonata, with prolonged pedal tones (echoing the descending fourth/tritones) over countless smaller bell motives as the music becomes more and more muted. The energy dissipates as the piece finally reaches apotheosis in the form of two B major triads in the final measure, before finally concluding with a single low B, recalling the ending of Liszt's *Sonata in B Minor*.

[30] Scriabin's late works (such as the 10th Sonata) often explore tonal centers which outline a triadic harmony, which provides structure to the quasi-atonality of the works. Although Feinberg uses tritone and not tertiary relationships here, the process is very similar (Roberts, *Modernism in Russian Music,* 91).
[31] Fuksman, 31-32.

The large-scale descent from one extreme of the piano to the other, condensing to a single note is powerful. Feinberg's good friend and colleague Anatoly Alexandrov once commented "If somebody would ever ask me to choose ten fragments from the entire piano literature, the coda from Feinberg's Sixth Sonata would be included."[32]

Feinberg's Seventh and Eighth Sonatas can be viewed as the transition to his later change of style which took place in the early part of the 1930s. The two can be grouped as a pair and share several common features. It's important to keep in mind when considering these sonatas that Feinberg withheld publishing both works because of the political climate of his time, and the two weren't published until after his death. Since these two sonatas were unknown for nearly fifty years, they appear in a very small about of the Feinberg literature. However, these two sonatas should be viewed as an extension of his earlier style and expand upon some of his early compositional techniques.

Both the Seventh and the Eighth Sonatas share a three-movement structure, a shift away from the more common single-movement plan. Feinberg unifies both works with cyclical elements like reoccurring motives from previous movements, such as in the appearance of the first movement motive in the coda of the Seventh Sonata's finale. The two works adhere to the monothematic approach of earlier works, but motives continue to develop in subsequent movements, uniting all three movements. Both sonatas also feature a shift away from the more dramatic elements of the previous sonatas, and are much more subdued in character.[33] Both works can also be seen as an expansion on some of the elements found in the Sixth Sonata, specifically the tritone relationships between sections: The Seventh Sonata's three movements are in C, F-sharp, and C, with the concluding section oscillating between C and F-sharp. Similarly, the Eighth Sonata's first movement moves from the opening G major to end in D-flat before the C major Andante movement.[34] The Finale's fugato opening, although atonal, begins with imitation at

[32] Fuksman, 50.
[33] Bunin, 62-63.
[34] Powell, 154-155.

the tritone. As the movement develops, the presence of G pedals in the bass begin to take hold, and the piece ends in the G major of the first movement.

Feinberg's early style can be best aligned with that of Scriabin's. His early works exhibit Scribinesque textures, figurations, and harmonic language. In his earliest sonatas, this manifests as his embrace of pandiatonic techniques; passages in which his conception of harmony is linear, such as in his first two sonatas. In his works from the early and mid-1920s this technique evolved into the use of prolonged pedal points, which emphasized areas of structural significance over which he was able to deploy quasi-improvisatory rapid successions of motives. Feinberg's music is often highly virtuosic and requires a formidable pianist to accomplish successfully. His music can be viewed as the epitome of Scriabin's frenetic writing to the most extreme degree possible.[35]

One of the most defining features of Feinberg's early style is his emphasis on small motivic units, an approach which inevitably lead to a monothematic approach to form. Much of the music from his early period can be reduced to constant use of small motivic cells to form harmony. As a result, one of the largest criticisms of his early style (such as the one at the top of this chapter) deals with his purely instrumental approach to composition, with little emphasis on melody or longer lines. Feinberg often employs of leitmotif treatment of motives, repurposing them for accompanimental or textural roles. In more complex works such as the Sixth Sonata, this emphasis on motives is the defining feature of the work, influencing all aspects of the music, occasionally leading Feinberg to abandon tonality altogether in favor of motivic cohesion.

[35] Roberts, 8.

Chapter 3: Middle Period (1932 – 1948) – Clarity

Feinberg's musical style underwent large-scale stylistic changes beginning around the early part of the 1930s as he adapted his music to the political climate of Stalinist Russia. Whether or not these adaptations were solely a reaction to politics alone is somewhat speculative, but it is clear that he was well-aware of the politics surrounding modern composers; as mentioned previously regarding the epigraph on his Sixth Sonata, he was forced to buy out all the copies of the piece in circulation once Oswald Spengler was branded a fascist.[1] He also withheld publishing works that might bring him unwanted attention, including two of the original ten Romances on Pushkin texts Op. 26 (1936) titled "Sappho" and "In Vain I Run to the Heights of Zion."[2] Likewise, he withheld publishing his Seventh and Eighth Sonatas altogether. Clearly Feinberg was careful to toe the Party line and took actions to avoid unwanted attention.

Feinberg also seemed to have felt pressure to adapt his music to the tastes of the public. The debut of his First Piano Concerto, Op. 20 in 1932 was an enormous failure, which greatly affected his confidence. The premiere was recounted by Mikail Sokolov:

> The Concerto . . . was clearly incomprehensible to the public . . . and the piano part was exclusively virtuosic with Feinberg's characteristic textures (with complex polyphony, garlands of chords and crossing of hands) . . . The lack of comprehension of Feinberg's individual style of writing on the part of the conductor (who was nonetheless very good) was more than matched by the complete incomprehension on the part of the public. . . This incomprehension . . . left a deep impression on Feinberg who didn't play his own works for some time thereafter.[3]

Following the incredible pace set in the 1920s, the quantity music from this period is considerably small. There is a strong emphasis on miniature genres, including several song cycles including those on texts by Pushkin and Lermontov, the Second Suite Op. 25, and Three Melodies Op. 27a, all pieces which

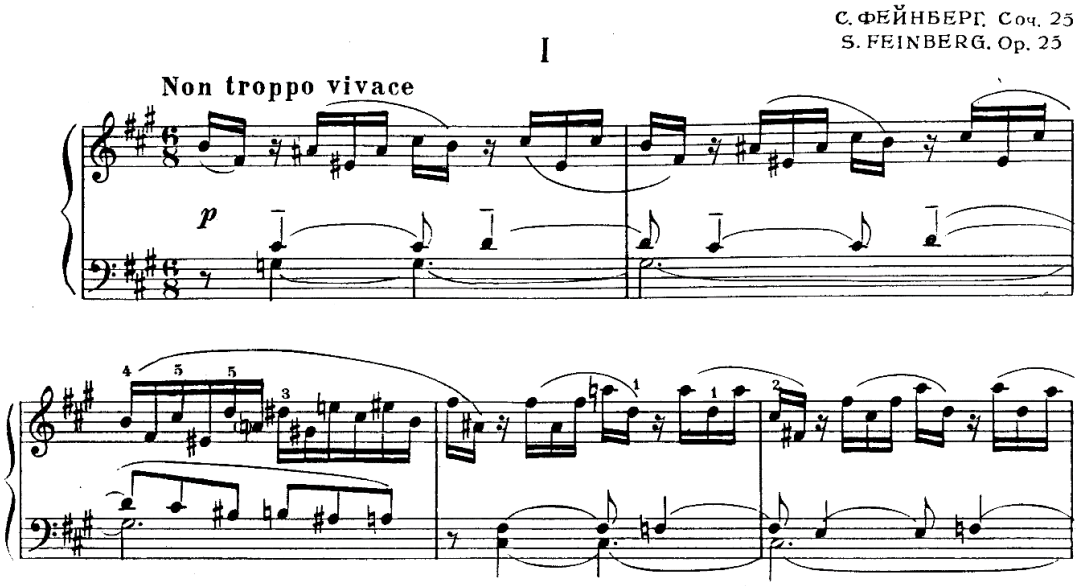
[1] Georgievskaya, 3.
[2] Bunin, 68.
[3] Powell, 155.

are far more accessible and perhaps tailored for public consumption.[4] The other representative works from this period are the Ninth and Tenth Piano Sonatas, and the most significant work – the Second Piano Concerto, Op. 36.

The surviving music from this period shows a considerable emphasis on melody and less prominence of small motivic units which permeate his earlier style. It is no coincidence that Feinberg began to compose more songs during this period than before, and the previously mentioned Romances set to Pushkin texts are often considered his finest.[5] Gone also are the dense textures of layered motifs which saturate the music of his early period. Lastly, the music from this period is much more tonal and often features a more traditional approach to harmony.

The first important work from this new period is the Second Suite for Piano Op. 25 (1936). The piece is comprised of five short contrasting movements that are meant to be played attacca. The extreme contrasts within the piece highlight Feinberg's evolving style throughout this time; much of the music in the Suite could easily have come from his early style, however it is often immediately contrasted with the clearer and more melodic music representative of his middle period. The first movement establishes a frenzied texture without any clear melody and ambiguous tonality, traits usually associated with the early style:

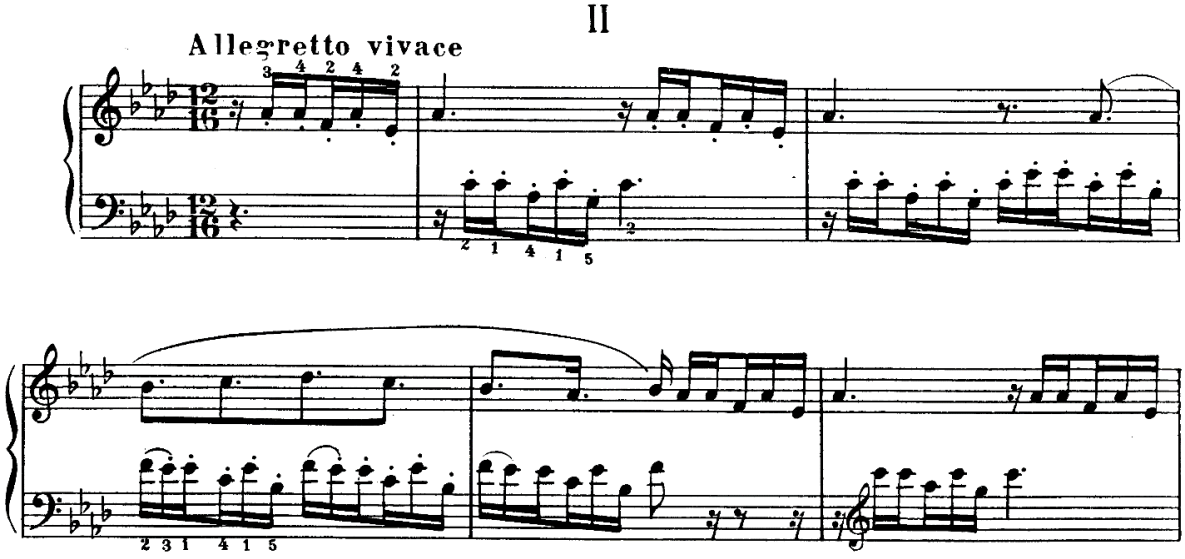
[4] Feinberg seems to have taken an interest in miniatures beginning in the 1920s with his First Suite Op. 11, Three Preludes Op. 15, the Humoresque Op. 19 and the Berceuse Op. 19a, however these pieces very much belong in his early style.
[5] Bunin, 67-68.



Example 3.1 Feinberg Second Suite, Mov. 1, mm. 1 – 5.

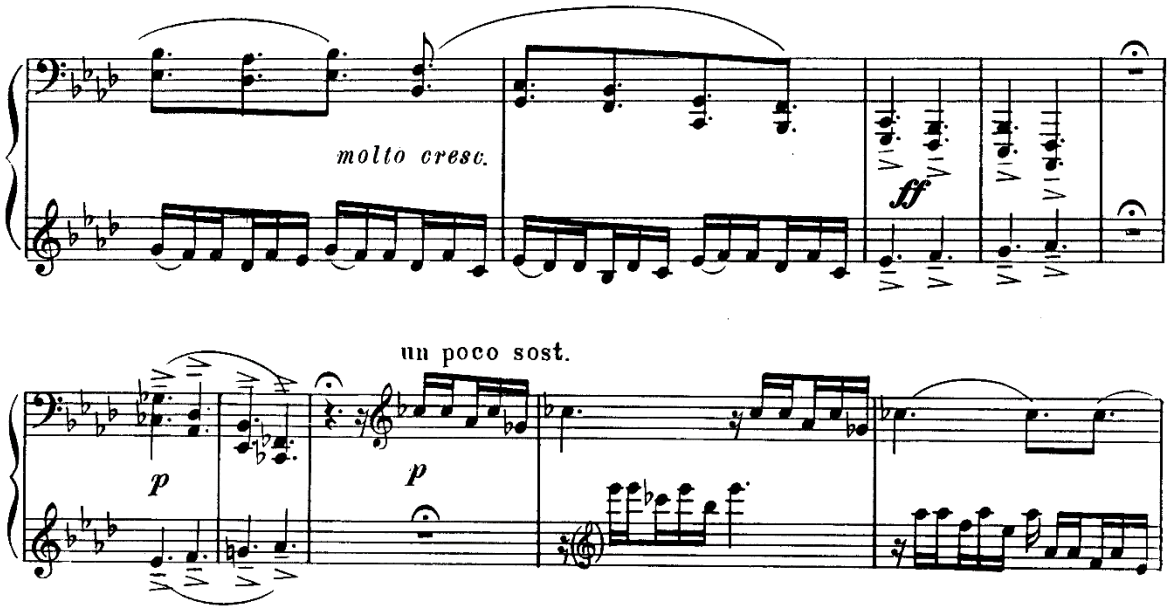
The music alternates rapidly between F-sharp major and F-sharp minor, the tenor voice moving almost always chromatically throughout. The brief movement ends as the bass descends to a low F-sharp and the piece abruptly ends in F-sharp minor.

The charming second movement features a staccato repeated-note figure which becomes the backdrop for a long diatonic melody. The drastically thinned texture and absence of any accidentals on the entirety of the first page is striking, and typical of Feinberg's middle period:



Example 3.2 Feinberg Second Suite, Mov. 2, mm. 1 – 6.

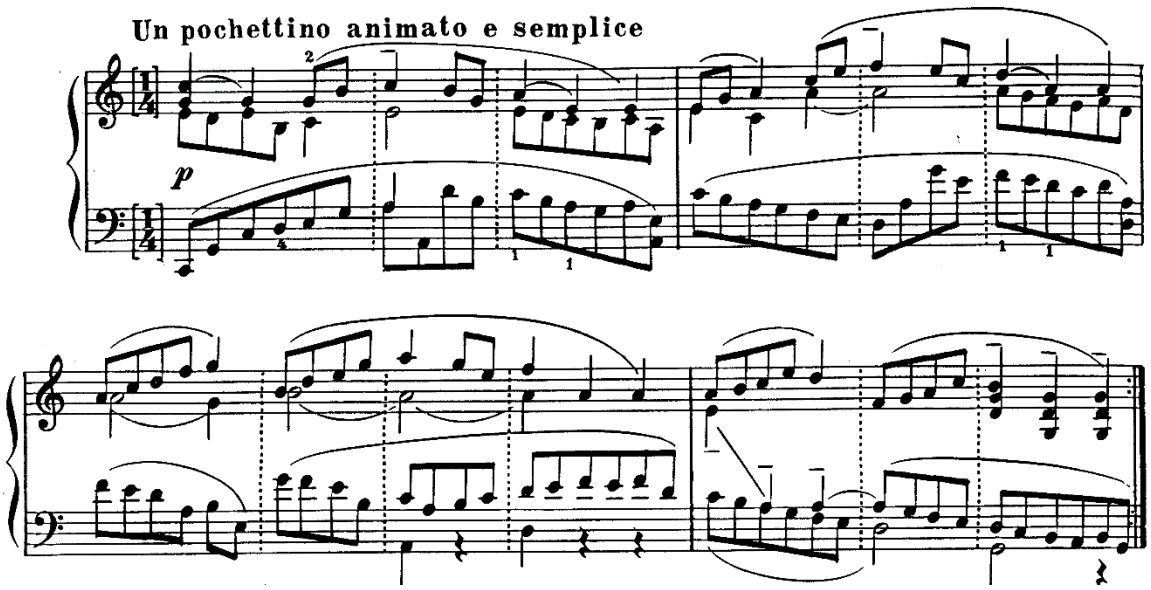
Of note in this movement is the rather specific and alarming use of hand crossings. At the climax of the movement, the left hand's repeated repeated-note figure remains in the middle register as the right hand descends to the lowest B-flat on the piano, spanning over 3 octaves between the two crossed hands:



Example 3.3 Feinberg Second Suite, Mov. 2, mm. 13 – 22.

The central movement of the Suite is one of Feinberg's most lyrical and diatonic pieces in his entire solo piano output. The contrapuntal three voice texture is reminiscent of a Bach chorale, and the entire movement has a total of three accidentals in its entirety. Interesting is the meter, which he notates as one phrase per measure, with irregular subdivided measures in groups of two or three to show internal emphasis. This could also support the possible reference to a Bach chorale; perhaps the metric ambiguity is an attempt to capture the restarting of phrases after the fermatas of a chorale:

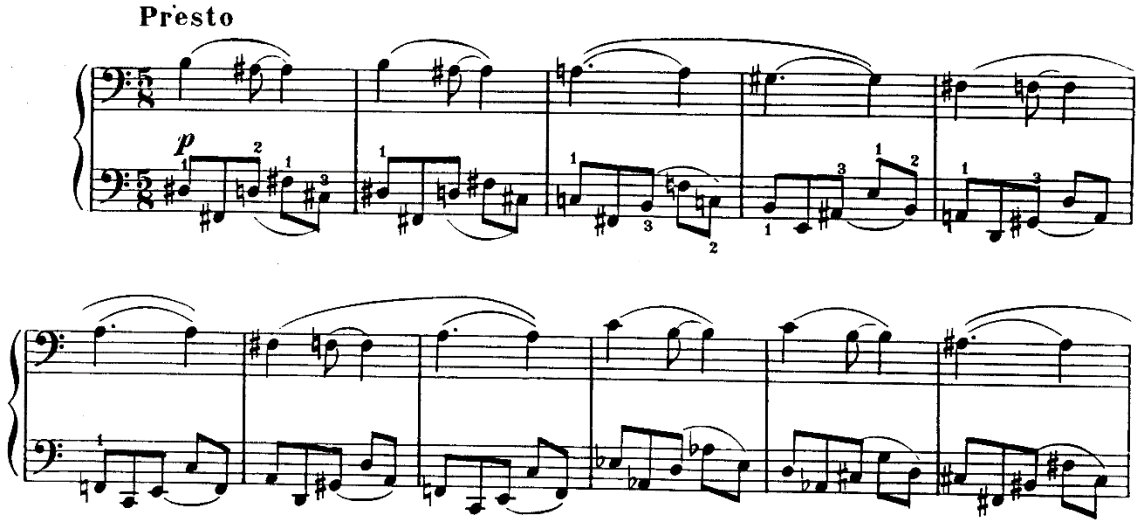
III



Example 3.4 Feinberg Second Suite, Mov. 3, mm. 1 – 4.

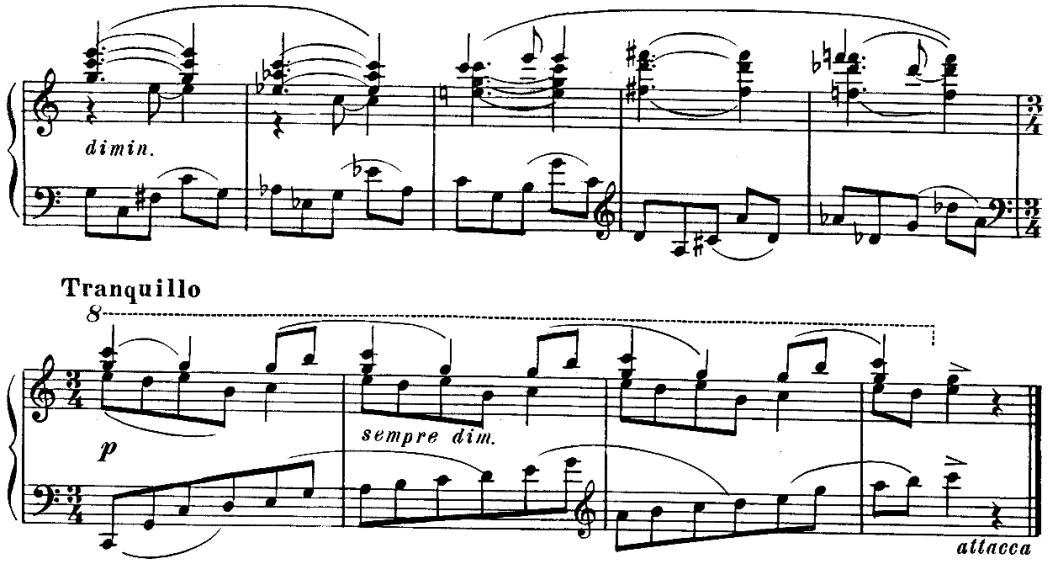
The fourth movement is a rapid *Presto* in a relentless 5/8 meter. Many elements of his earlier style make a return here, including fragmented melodic figures and tonal ambiguity. Throughout the movement the left-hand plays accompanimental eighth notes, requiring a highly flexible wrist to perform at tempo, while the right-hand plays fragments of a descending chromatic figure. This right-hand fragment could be derivative of the first movement's descending B – A-sharp gesture heard in the first measure of the entire piece.

IV



Example 3.5 Feinberg Second Suite, Mov. 4, mm. 1 – 11.

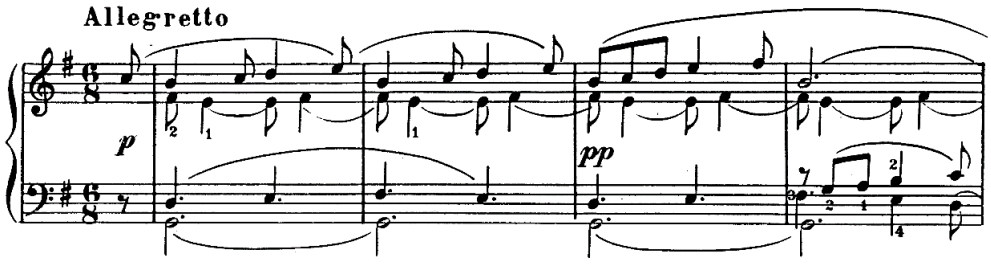
The movement explores several tonal areas without ever establishing a clear sense of tonic. Also interesting is the left-hand's pattern of alternating between major and minor tonalities, again reminiscent of the opening movement. The piece moves through several disparate tonalities, most often by descending chromatically, before finally arriving at C Major. The final four *Tranquillo* measures are a quote of the previous lyrical third movement, now in the upper register of the piano. The immediate change in meter, texture, tempo, register, and most importantly harmonic stability are extremely jarring upon a first hearing. Nowhere else in the entire suite does the rapid juxtaposition of styles feel so explicit:



Example 3.6 Feinberg Second Suite, Mov. 4, mm. 72 – 80.

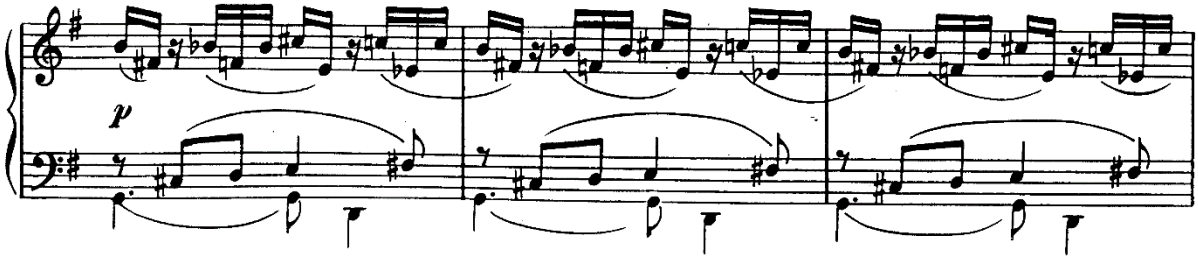
Feinberg continues to highlight the juxtaposition of styles in the final movement, in which elements of previous movements seem to be referenced or quoted. The movement begins with a lullaby-like G Major *Allegretto*, grounded firmly by G pedals in the bass:

V



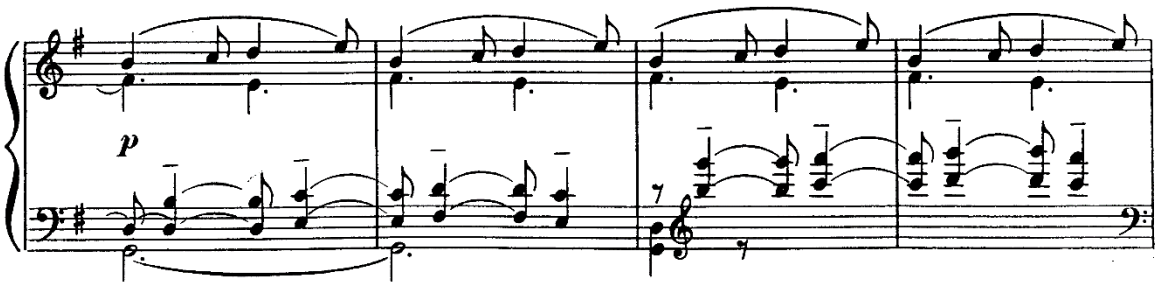
Example 3.7 Feinberg Second Suite, Mov. 5, mm. 1 – 4.

After only eight bars, the music quickly starts moving through a circle of fifths sequence, passing through the very distant tonalities of D-flat, B Major, and A-flat before arriving again at G Major. Here Feinberg directly quotes the frenzied texture of the opening movement, now superimposed over the lullaby melody in the tenor voice along with the return of the G pedals. Here also is the B – A-sharp gesture from the opening movement reinterpreted as B – B-flat:



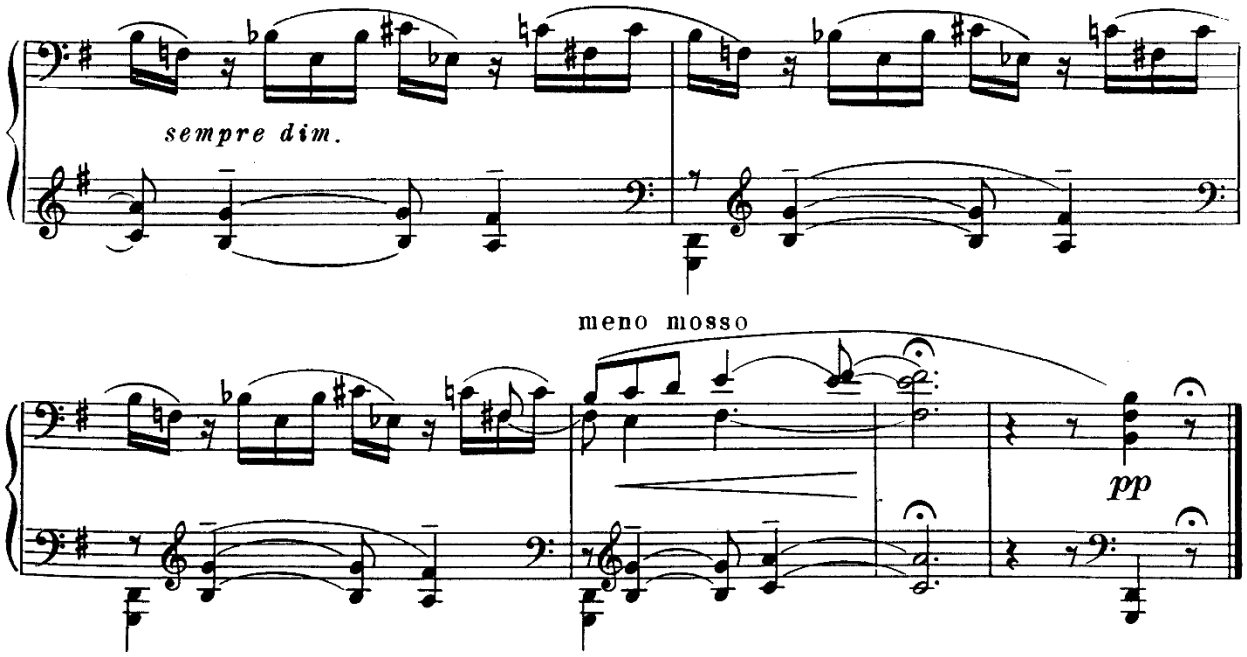
Example 3.8 Feinberg Second Suite, Mov. 5, mm. 17 – 19.

Also making a return in the final movement are the hand crossing gestures of the second movement, but to a lesser extreme:



Example 3.9 Feinberg Second Suite, Mov. 5, mm. 33 – 36.

The Suite concludes very much as it began, with the initial chromatic texture of the opening movement pulling the tonality toward G Minor while the left-hand grounds the music in G Major. After one final swell, the music comes to rest on a G Maj7:



Example 3.10 Feinberg Second Suite, Mov. 5, mm. 66 – 71.

Throughout the Second Suite there is a clear emphasis on contrast in style, which serves as an excellent introduction to Feinberg's second period of composition. Nowhere until his late period are elements of his two stylistic tendencies on such clear display in juxtaposition to one another in a single work.

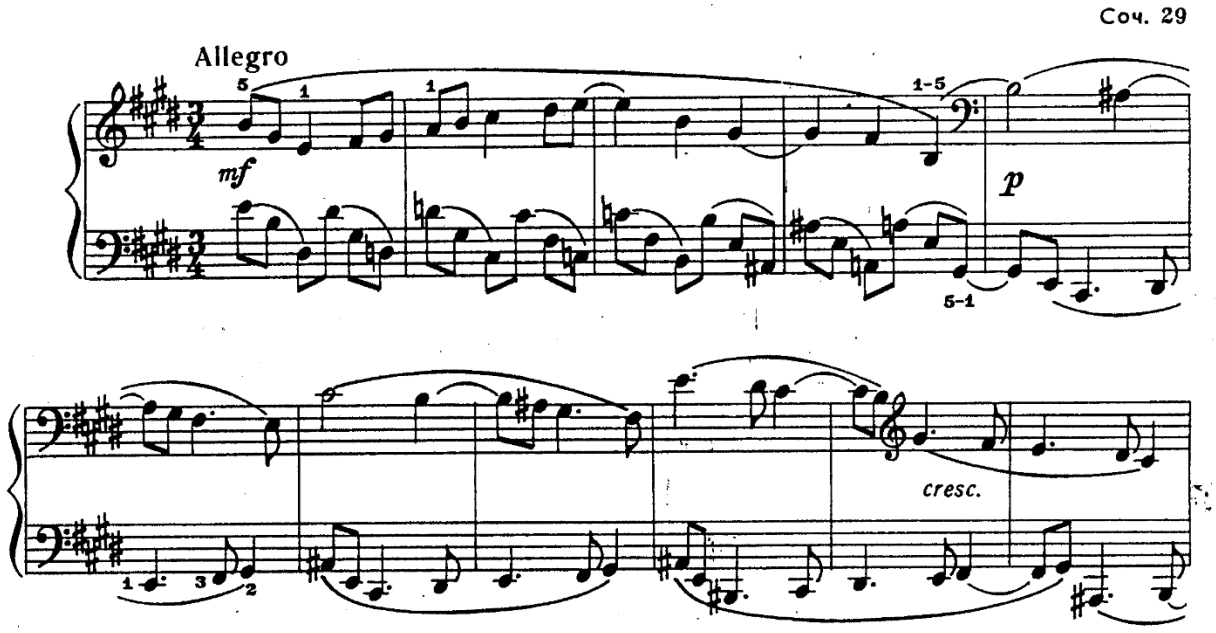
Feinberg's emphasis on vocal music during this period is significant. The bulk of his total vocal works come from the 1930s and include the Five National Songs Op. 18 (1932), Two Songs after Alexander Zharov Op. 22 (1932), Three Songs Op. 23 (1938), Eight [Ten] Romances after Alexander Pushkin Op. 26 (1936), and Seven Romances after Mikhail Lermontov Op. 28 (1940). The reason for his turning to the vocal idiom during this period is perhaps due to the lack of accessibility of his music. To reach a wider audience and avoid any trouble with the authorities for not composing "music for the masses," he turned to a more accessible genre.[6] Perhaps it's no coincidence that the 1930s also brought

[6] The growing complexity of his music, exemplified by the Sixth Sonata, did not go unnoticed by the RAPM (Russian Association for Proletarian Music) and other proletarian groups, something he was well-aware of. (Powell, *After Scriabin: Six Composers and the Development of Russian Music*, 155-156).

about a revival of Classic Russian poetry to the forefront of modern Soviet composers, including the works of Lermontov and Pushkin.[7]

Feinberg was a connoisseur of Russian poetry and could often recite vast amounts of poetry at any given time.[8] Therefore, it is interesting to note some of the criticisms which his song settings faced, including that they tend to be somewhat passive and less romantic or as passionate as the text demands. Restraint prevails throughout the songs, and even at the climaxes of the texts, Feinberg's outbursts are short-lived, almost as if he is observing how the text effects others' feelings, not his own.[9]

The first large-scale piano work from this new period is the Ninth Piano Sonata Op. 29. The sonata comes from 1939, eleven long years after the completion of the Eighth Sonata. A relatively short work in comparison to his earlier sonatas, the piece is set in a single movement sonata-rondo form. The piece stands out in Feinberg's output for its brightness and optimism:



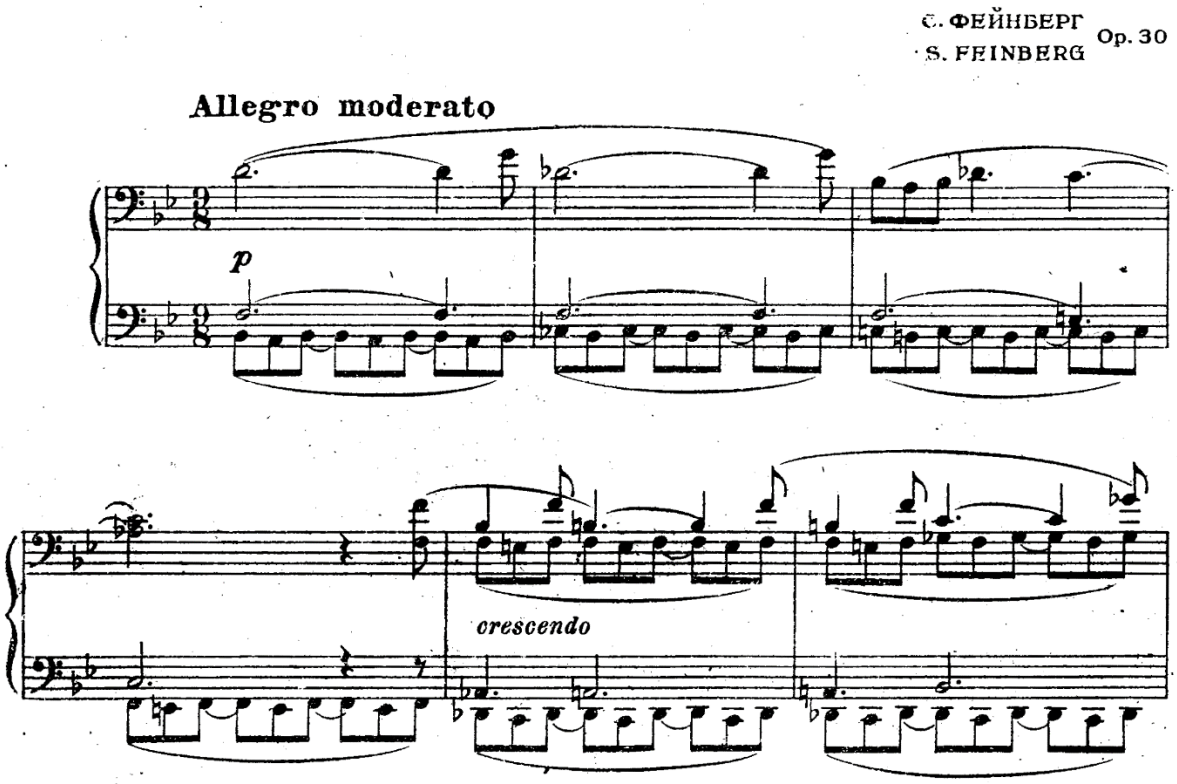
Example 3.11 Feinberg Ninth Sonata, mm. 1 – 11.

There is a considerable emphasis on melody throughout the piece, and even in its most climactic moments there is still clarity of voices, with a distinct melody always present. The textures of the Ninth

[7] Likhacheva, 120.
[8] Rimm, 90-91.
[9] Likhacheva, 121-122.

Sonata pale in comparison to previous works, and there is an open transparency which adds to the overall positive affect of the piece.

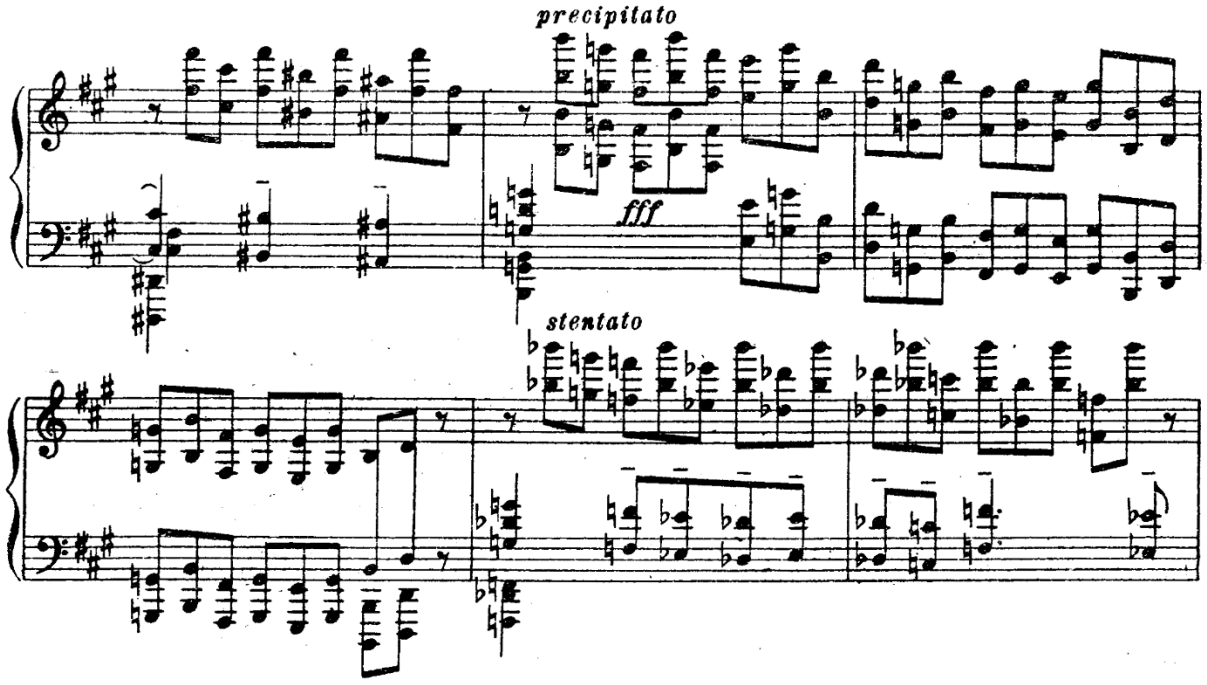
In contrast, the Tenth Sonata is a very dark piece. The work was composed between 1943-1946 while Feinberg was displaced in Kyrgyzstan after being twice evacuated during the war.[10] The ominous rumbling in the lowest register of the piano, militaristic rhythms, and explosive dynamism all support a reading of the piece as a reaction to the war which surrounded the composer.



Example 3.12 Feinberg Tenth Sonata, mm. 1 – 6.

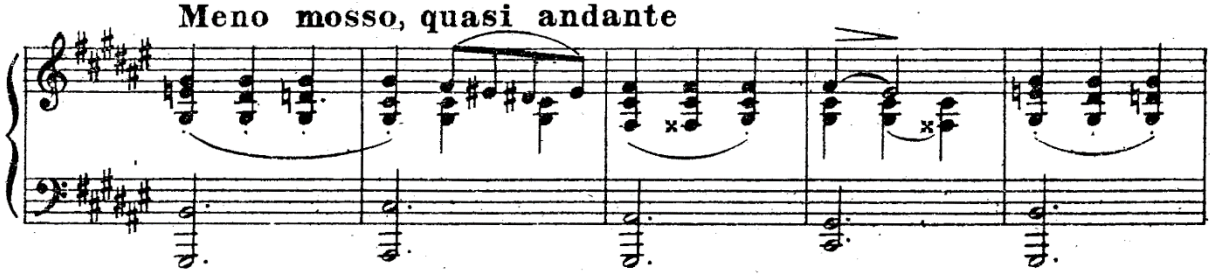
Of interest is how Feinberg develops the initial eighth-note "rumble" in the bass: first heard as only a half-step between B-flat–A, the gap between the two notes widens as the piece develops, until at its climax the rumbling eight-notes become an explosion of jagged octave leaps:

[10] Bunin, 88-89.



Example 3.13 Feinberg Tenth Sonata, mm. 280 – 285.

Another important feature of Feinberg's middle period is the contrast of themes. Whereas his early style's themes morph from an existing motif into a secondary theme, Feinberg's themes from this time are usually highly contrasting independent ideas. Another such example is the Tenth Sonata's minuet-like secondary theme, which contrasts the violent militaristic character of first subject:

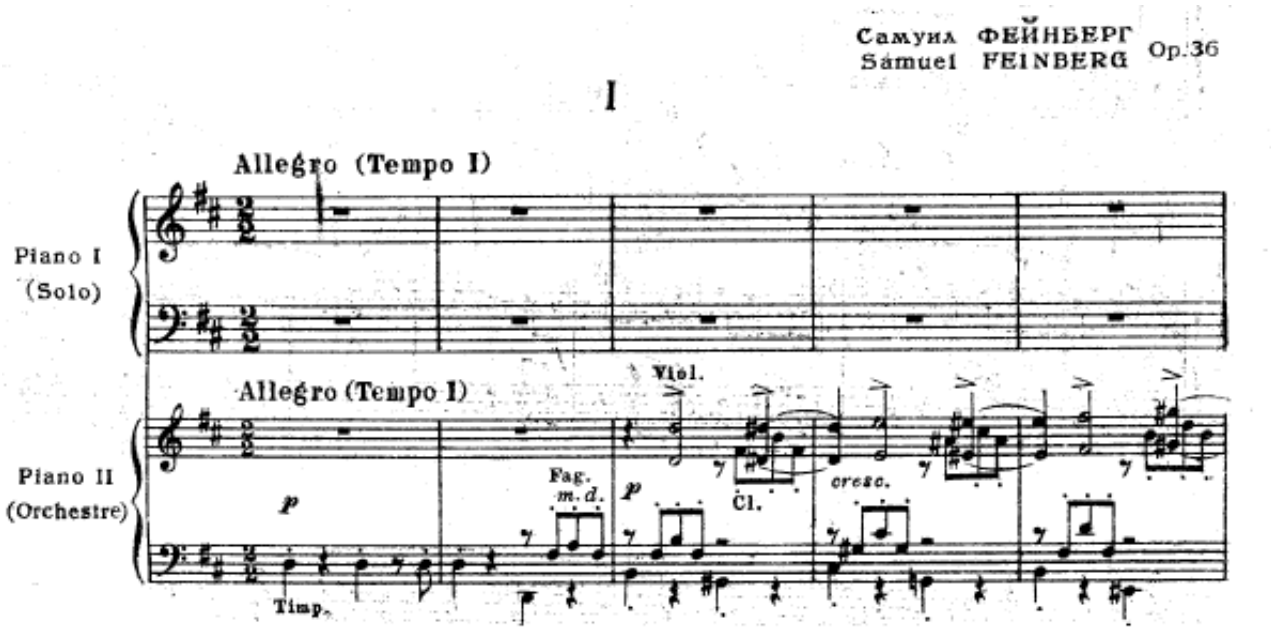


Example 3.14 Feinberg Tenth Sonata, mm 145 – 149.

The most significant and important work from Feinberg's middle period is his Second Piano Concerto, Op. 36 (1945-46). The piece is conceived very much in the Classical tradition; it is the only work in Feinberg's entire output cast in a four-movement plan. The piece adheres to the Classical concerto traditions, including a complete orchestra exposition, soloist cadenza at the end of the principle movement, a slow second movement followed by a Scherzo third, and an uplifting finale. Harmonically,

the piece is grounded with a strong sense of tonality, and key relationships between subjects are also treated in the traditional manner. All the previously mentioned stylistic elements of his middle period are on full display, and the piece is perhaps the most representative of Feinberg's entire period style.

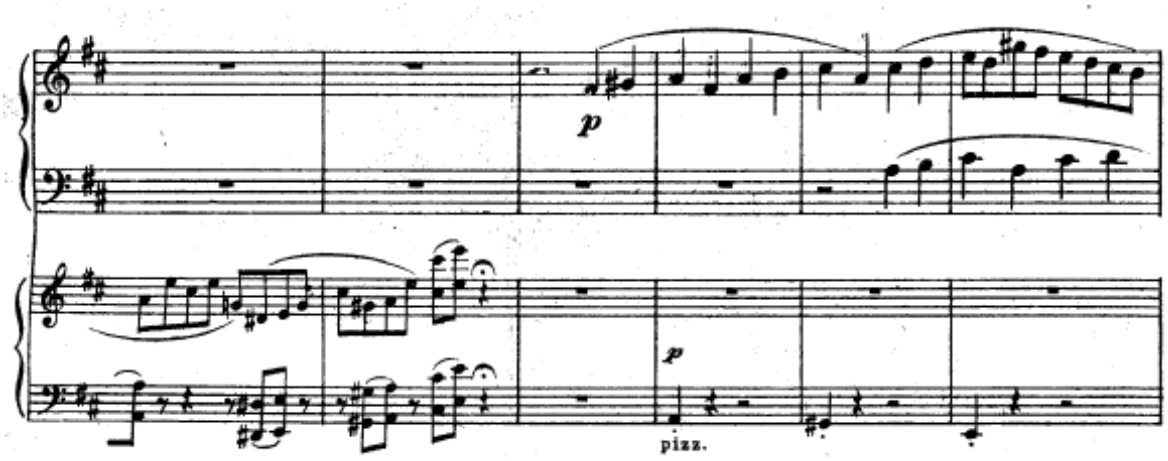
The first movement features three distinct and contrasting themes. The first theme consisting of groups of rhythmic eighth-notes against a long, rising melody:



Example 3.15 Feinberg Second Concerto, Mov. 1, mm. 1 – 5.

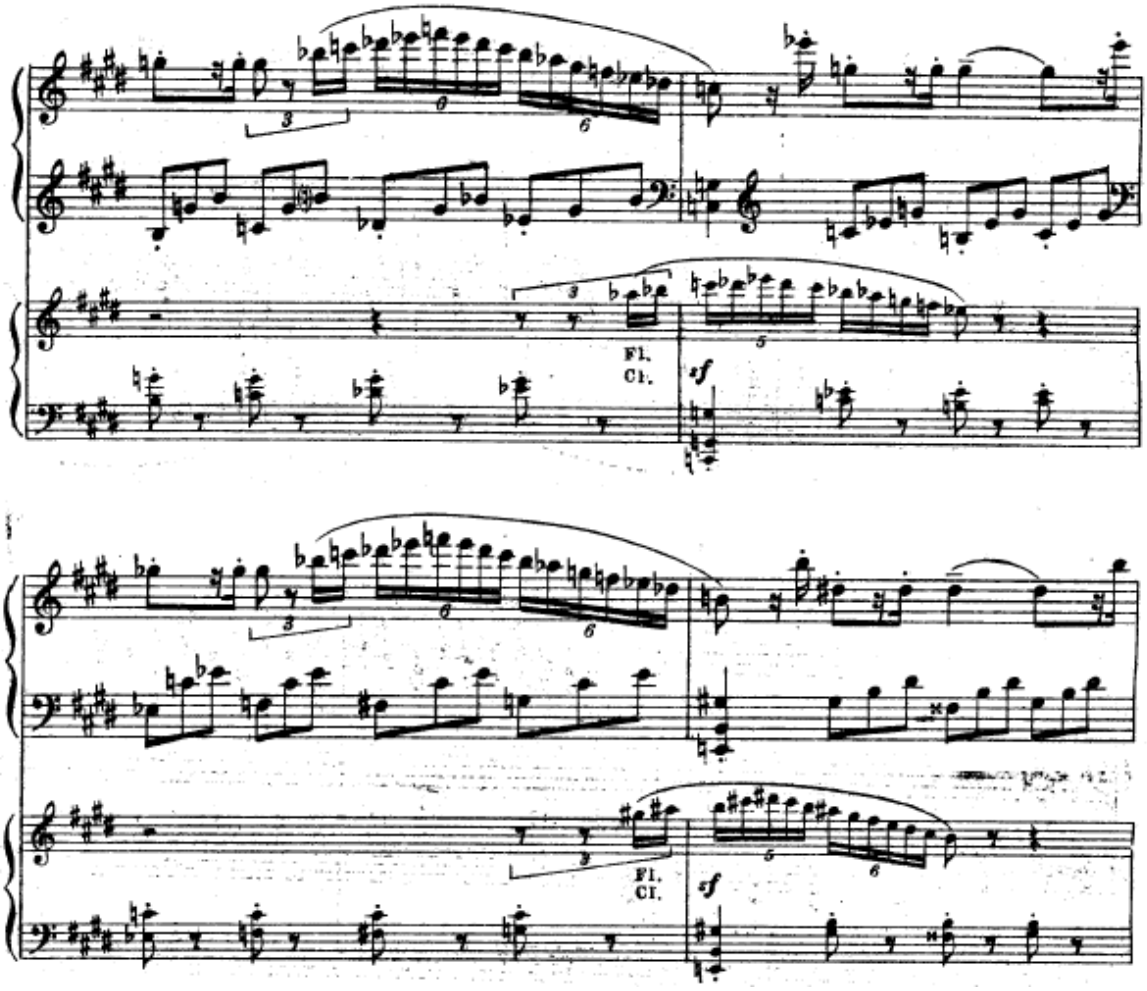
Once the soloist enters, one of the techniques Feinberg employs to achieve clarity in both the primary and tertiary subjects is the call-and-response and back-and-forth between soloist and orchestra. The two forces answer and build upon each's short phrases until they combine forces at the end of large sections to amass energy. This technique allows Feinberg to maintain transparent textures while also building energy.

The second, lyrical subject is highly contrapuntal, and first introduced by the soloist as a canon. Of note are the long 4-bar phrases and use of pitches exclusively from the diatonic collection, idiomatic of Feinberg's middle period:



Example 3.16 Feinberg Second Concerto, Mov. 1, mm. 163 – 168.

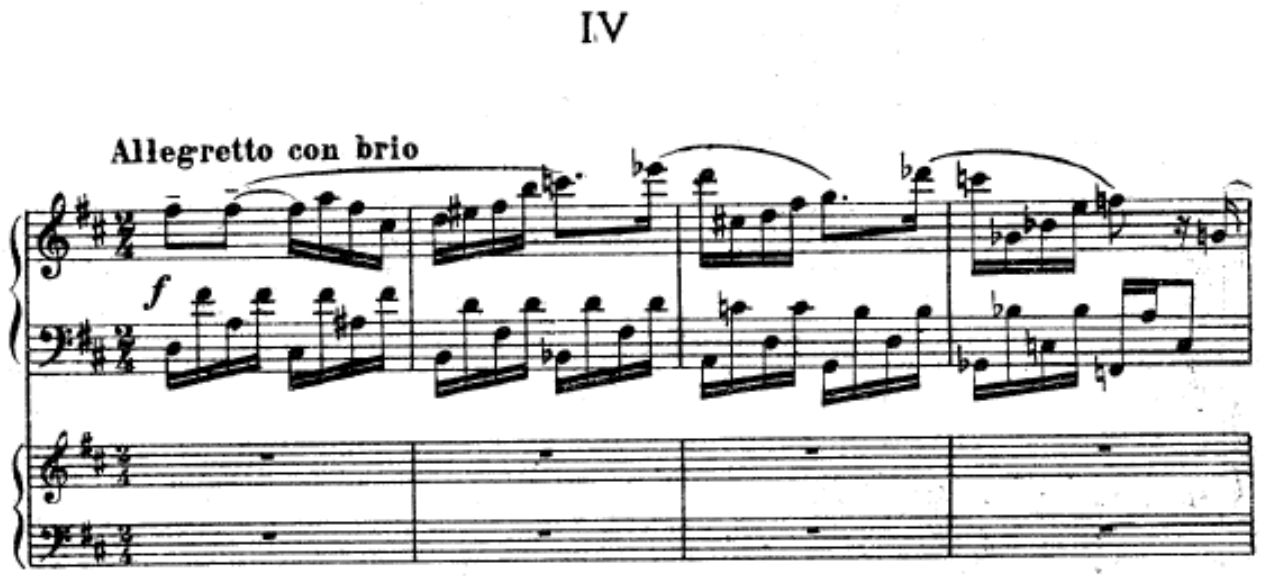
The final theme is highly rhythmic. The repeated notes and running scales feel as though they had been borrowed straight from a Prokofiev concerto:



Example 3.17 Feinberg Second Concerto, Mov. 1, mm. 213 – 216.

The second movement is a lush Andante with long lyrical lines first appearing in the orchestral introduction. Feinberg's treatment of the strings here is evocative of Rachmaninoff.[11] The Scherzo movement features driving rhythmic energy sustained by ostinatos and additional back-and-forth between the soloist and the orchestra. Whether deliberate or not, the movement is reminiscent of the Scherzo movement from Schumann's Piano Quartet, Op. 47, which also features similar swirling ostinatos and is also in G minor.

The finale of the concerto opens with a lively dance first introduced by the soloist. The clear textures and spread-out alberti accompaniment pattern of the left-hand are also suggestive of a Classical influence:



Example 3.18 Feinberg Second Concerto, Mov. 4, mm. 1 – 4.

The lyrical Andante second theme of the finale is again in direct opposition to the more rhythmic driving principal theme, again highlighting the extreme contrasts of material associated with Feinberg's middle period.

[11] Bunin, 92.

Feinberg's Middle Period style is best summarized as a motion toward clarity. Clarity of texture, harmony, and most importantly of melody. Many of the Scriabinesque elements of his early period are set aside in favor of more melodic interest. The melodies from this period are typically highly diatonic and far more lyrical than the more angular and harmonically-conceived melodies of his early period. Contrasts abound throughout these works, and his subjects are usually in stark contrast with one another. This period also saw a motion toward clarity of harmony – harmonic function becomes clearer and tonality is usually grounded.

Feinberg's compositional efforts seemed to wane during these years as he began to focus more on his teaching and performing career. However, the gap in large-scale Russian artwork was widespread and typical during the 1930s, especially with instrumental music. Many of the same trends exhibited in the works of Feinberg's middle period are evident in several other Soviet composers, including the diatonicism, prominence and simplicity of melody, and a move toward clarity. Some of these works include the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Symphonies of Mayakovski, Alexandrov's Seventh Piano Sonata, Shostakovich's 24 Preludes Op. 34, and Prokofiev's Second Violin Concerto.[12]

[12] Likhacheva, 106-107.

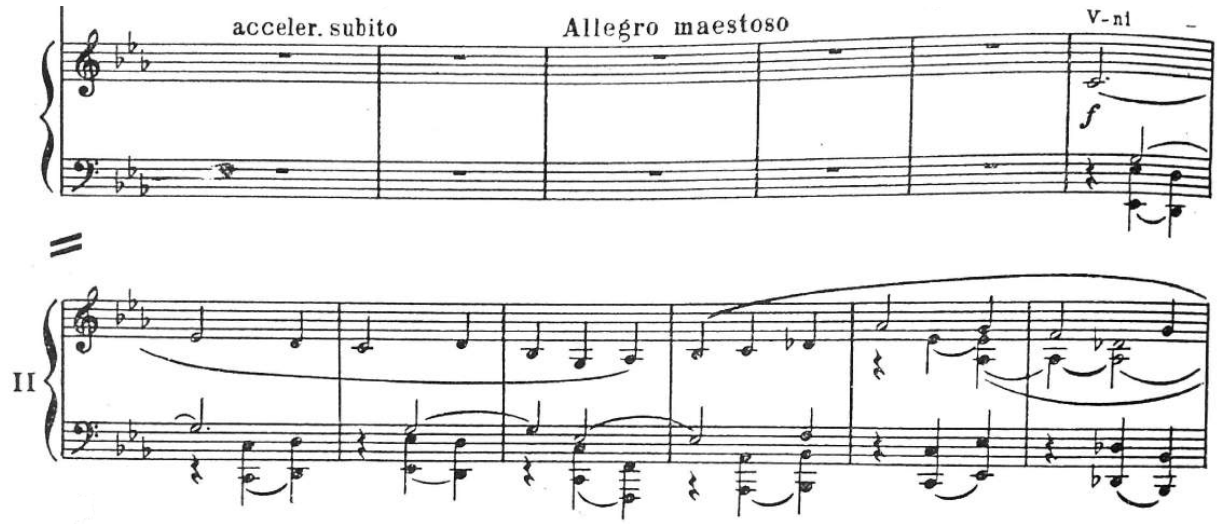
Chapter 4: Late Period (1947 – 1962) – Contrast and Synthesis

Following the end of the Second World War, Feinberg continued to concentrate his efforts on his teaching and performing career, and never returned to the level of compositional focus of his youth. He was also plagued with deteriorating health and reoccurring heart attacks which began while he was displaced during the war.

Feinberg's final works represent a synthesis of both his early and middle period compositions. Many of the elements of his middle period remain intact, such as the clarity of textures and harmony. Also, still intact are the contrasts of themes from his middle period. However, Feinberg takes these extremes to an even further degree by reintroducing much of the harmonic language and textural complexities of his early style, in direct opposition to the more accessible music of his middle period. Throughout many of the late pieces there is also an emphasis on sublimity: many pieces often feature extremely simple music and textures repeated over large sections, which create an almost trance-like hypnotic affect, a technique unique to his late style. As with his middle period there are very few pieces from this period, as Feinberg focused most of his efforts on his teaching and performing career. The four most representative works from this time are the Third Piano Concerto, Op.44 (1947), the Eleventh Piano Sonata, Op. 40 (1952), the Op. 46 Violin Sonata (1955-56), and the Twelfth Piano Sonata, Op. 48 (1962).

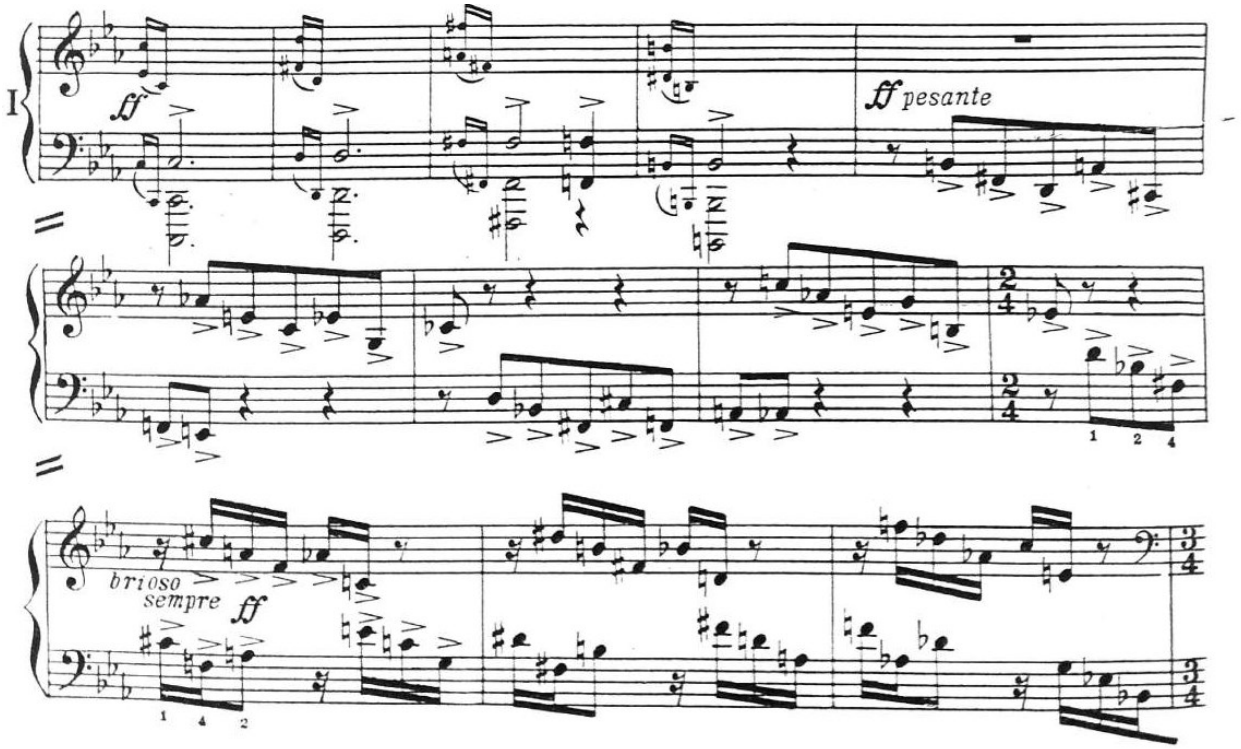
Following the success of his Second Concerto, Feinberg immediately launched into composing his Third. Completed in 1947, the work integrates many of the more accessible elements of his middle period with some of the Scriabinesque workings of his early style. The lush principal theme of the first movement, played by the strings after a brief introduction, is steeped in the Russian the folk tradition and has been compared to principal themes of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff:[1]

[1] Bunin, 102-103.



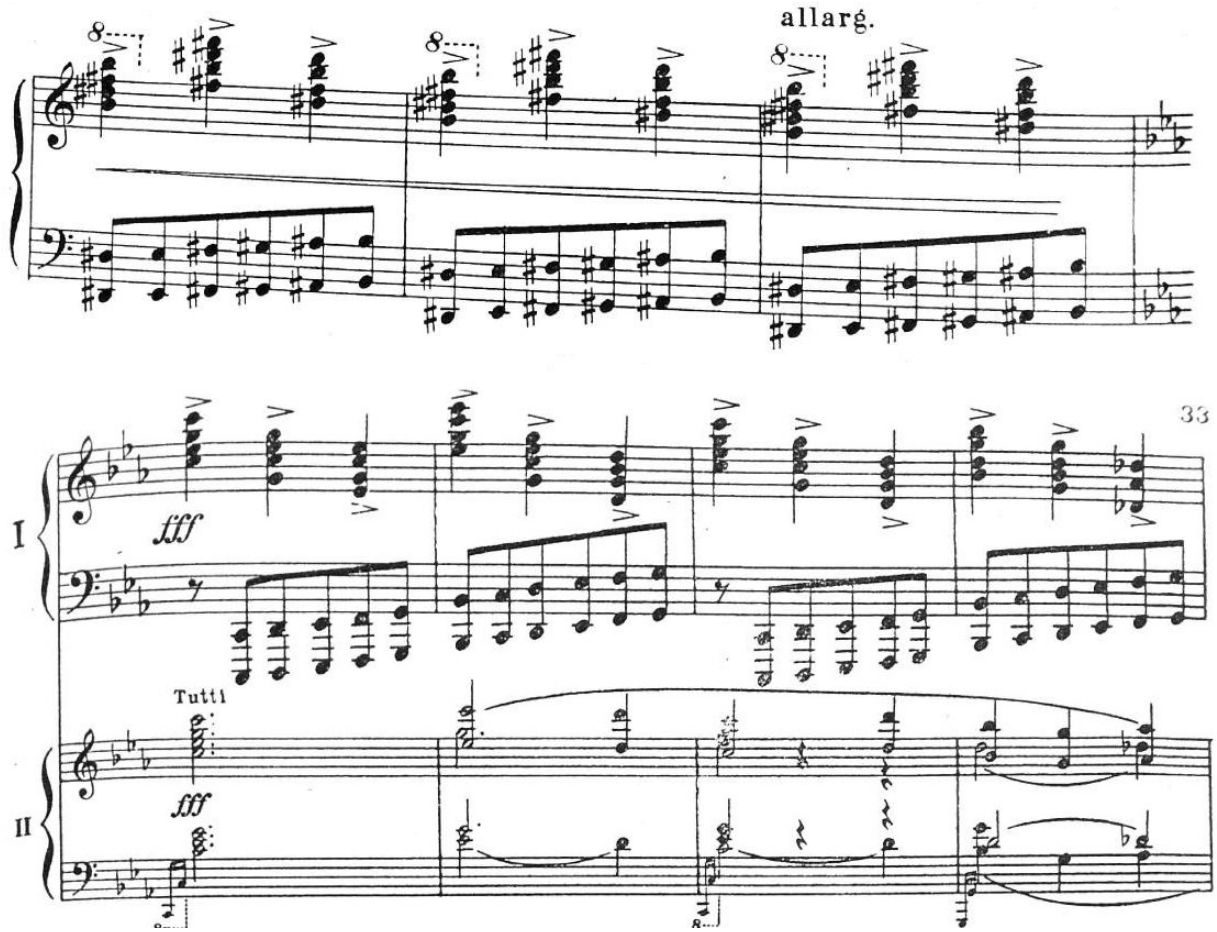
Example 4.1 Feinberg Third Concerto, Mov. 1, mm. 8 – 19.

Following a large expositional orchestral tutti, the soloist enters with a cadenza, immediately launching into some of the more ambiguous harmonic language found in some of the more complex pieces of his early period:



Example 4.2 Feinberg Third Concerto, Mov. 1, mm. 189 – 200.

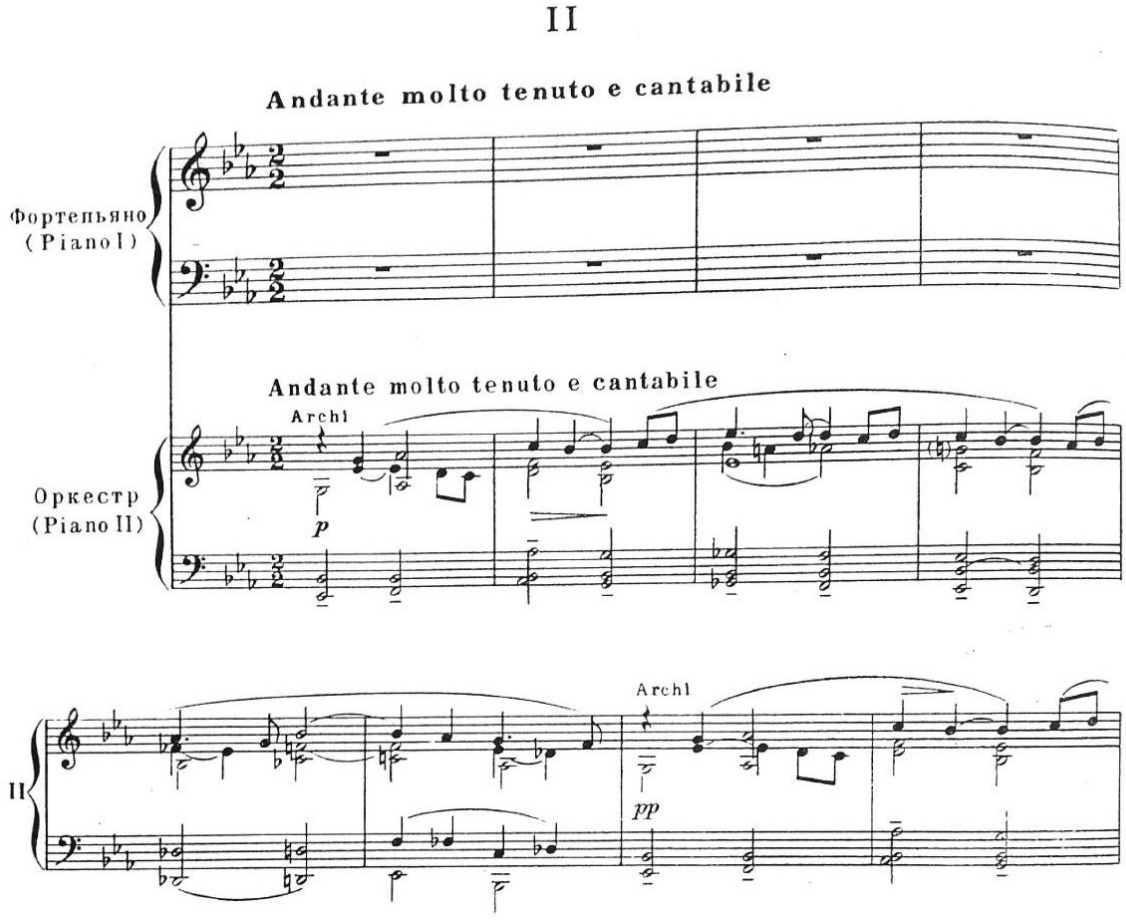
Like the Second Concerto, the piece is highly contrapuntal, featuring a polyphonic second subject and interweaving middle voices throughout much of the first movement. Here, as in the Second Concerto, Feinberg continues to make use of the rapid back-and-forth statements between soloist and orchestra. However, the harmonic language of the Third Concerto is far more ambitious than the earlier work. The Third Concerto explores more distant tonal areas and harmonic language is less functional. Harmonic motions are often chromatic and untraditional. For instance, at the climax of the development section, Feinberg prepares the long-anticipated C Minor recapitulation with prolonged emphasis of B Major:



Example 4.3 Feinberg Third Concerto, Mov. 1, mm. 490 – 496 (Recapitulation).

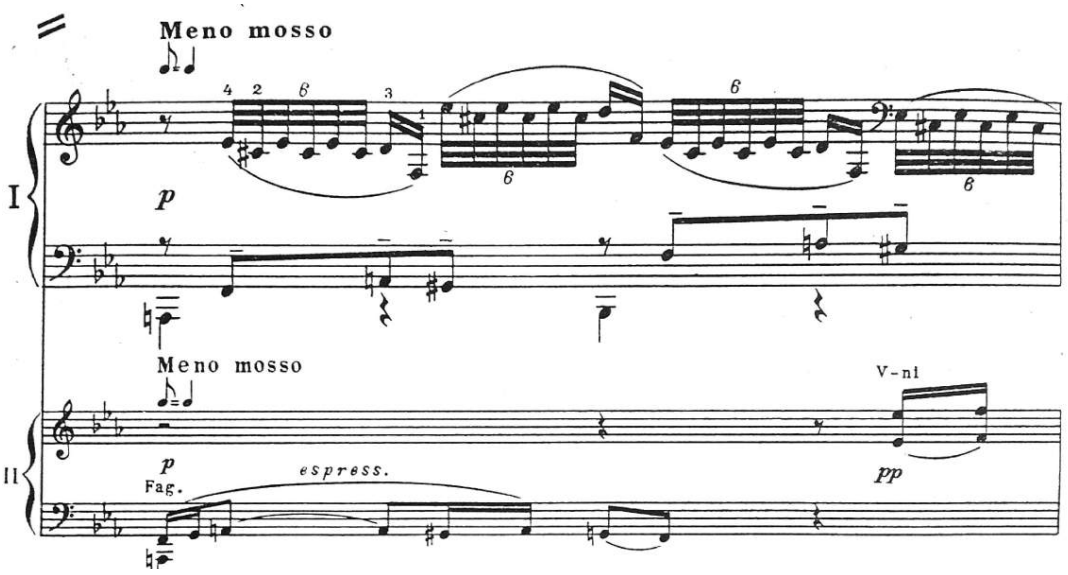
The Third Concerto also marks a return to the more extreme technical difficulties found in his early period – several climaxes of the piece feature pages of rapid octave and chord passages. The piece is also one of his longest works, requiring a substantial amount of endurance: played in its entirety, the piece compares to one of the piano concertos of Brahms in size and scope.

The second movement of the concerto again features extreme contrasts, and one of the clearest examples of his late style. Here the opening subject is a diatonic melody in the strings atop passing chromatic harmonies, again very much in the style of Tchaikovsky or Rachmaninoff:



Example 4.4 Feinberg Third Concerto, Mov. 2, mm. 1 – 8.

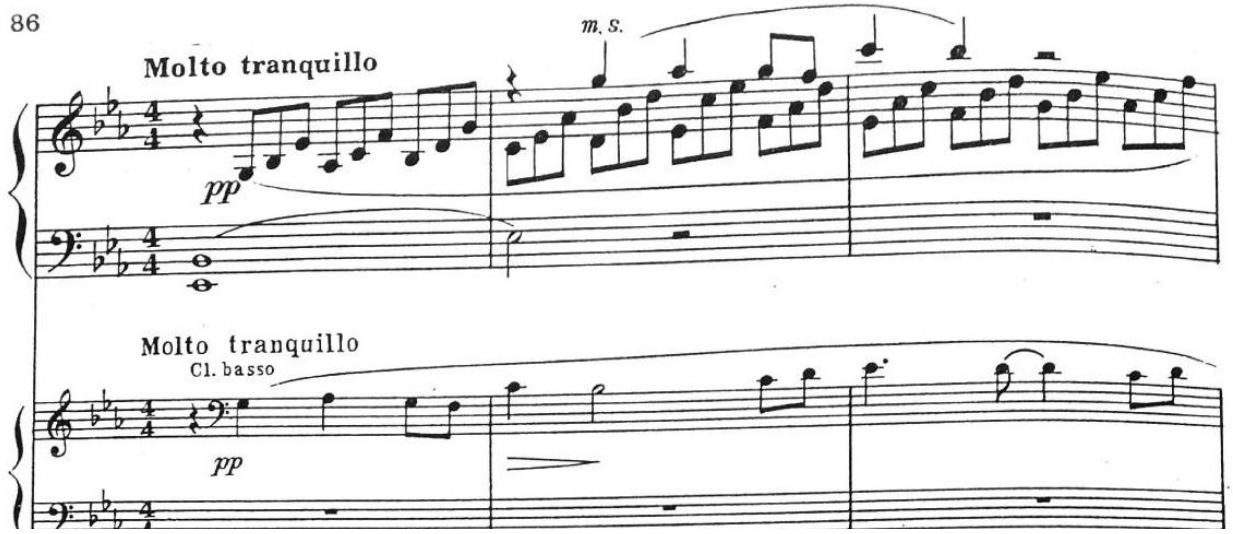
This rich string theme is immediately contrasted with the entrance of the soloist, entering abruptly with the frenetic writing so typical of Feinberg's early works:



Example 4.5 Feinberg Third Concerto, Mov. 2, m. 45.

Additional contrasts are achieved with use of orchestral solos in recitative-like sections alternating with the soloist. The highly turbulent and largely atonal middle section eventually slips back in the opening E-flat Major, bringing about the *Molto tanquillo* recapitulation. The arrival of the grounded E-flat Major recapitulation is striking following the chromatic and dense middle section, where a clear tonality is not always discernable.

Here the soloist and orchestra reach a synthesis – the orchestra and pianist play the opening melody in cannon, with varying orchestral sections in duet with the soloist over a backdrop of triplets, perhaps recalling the texture of the *Adagio* movement of Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto:



Example 4.6 Feinberg Third Concerto, Mov. 2, mm. 146 – 148.

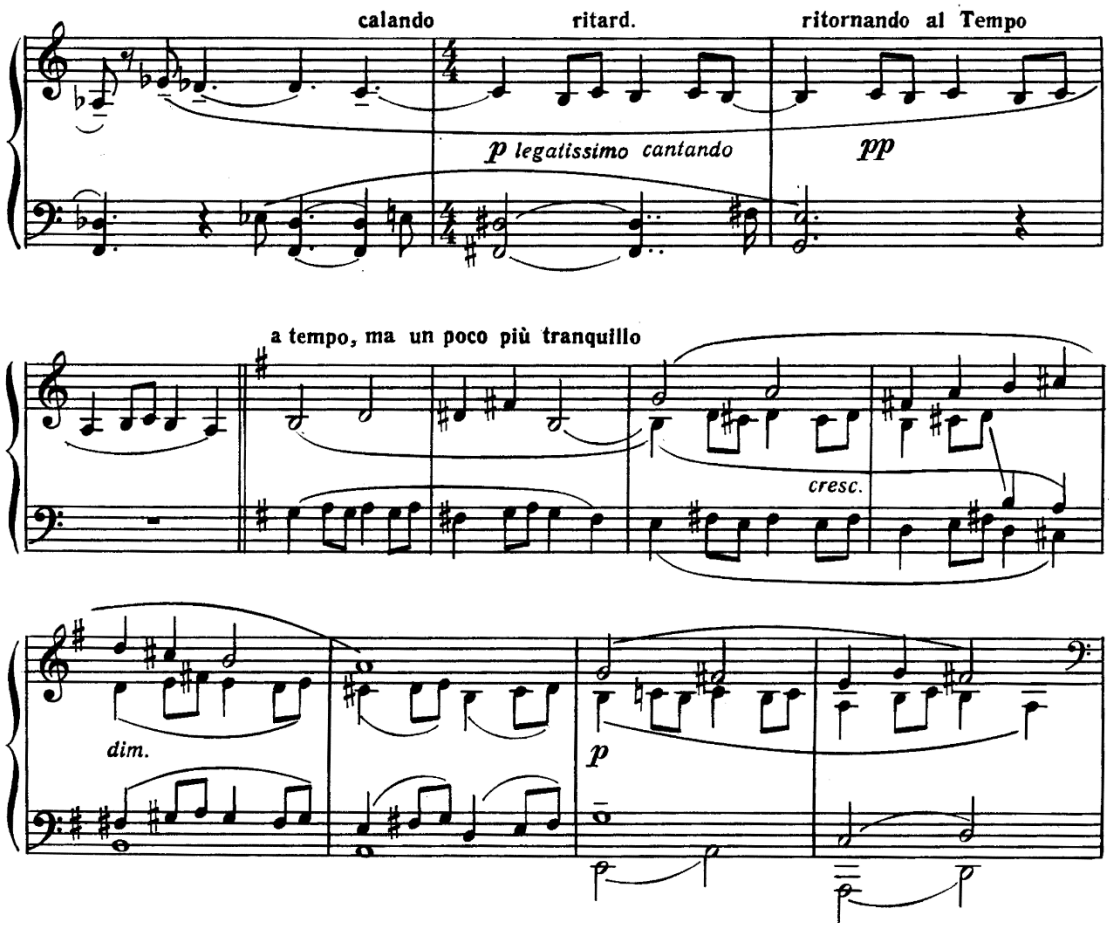
The agitato finale of the concerto feels as though it could have come directly from Feinberg's earliest compositions: the harmonic language is highly chromatic to the point of atonality, melodies are extremely fragmented, and the textures are contrapuntal and extremely dense. Many of the figurations are eerily similar to his early sonatas. The unifying elements of the movement are the reoccurring small rhythmic patterns, again recalling the highly motivic construction of his early works.

Unfortunately for Feinberg, the 1948 Central Communist Committee branded the Third Concerto a formalist composition, citing "discontinuous thinking and decadent exaggerations in the field of form and language." They also labeled his Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Sonatas as having "extremely subjective language." The brand came with restrictions placed upon his performing career and recording contracts.[2] As with the failure of his First Concerto, Feinberg was deeply affected by the branding, and he avoided composing seriously for several years thereafter, not completing his Eleventh Sonata until 1952.

The single-movement Eleventh Sonata contains several of the same elements as the Third Concerto – highly contrasting sections and themes, a return of some of the more ambiguous tonal language of his early period, and highly contrapuntal textures reminiscent of his early style. Several of the monothematic techniques of his early years also make a noticeable return – the two most prominent themes of the sonata are both put through a series of variations, akin to the thematic transformation techniques found in his earliest sonatas.

[2] Sokolova, 29.

In both the Third Concerto and Eleventh Sonata there seems to be perhaps an intentional effort by Feinberg to align himself with traditional Russian music – the second theme of the sonata is based on a Russian folk melody.[3] The melody itself is very narrow in range, only spanning the distance of a third, yet immediately after its introduction Feinberg develops it into a four-voiced fugue texture:



Example 4.7 Feinberg Eleventh Sonata, mm. 45 – 56.

At its most complex, the sonata explores many of the dense three-stave contrapuntal textures found in his early works while contrasting them with simpler two-voice passages. Effectively, the sonata combines the deployment of small motives which dominated his early style with the emphasis on melody which was so prominent in his middle period.[4]

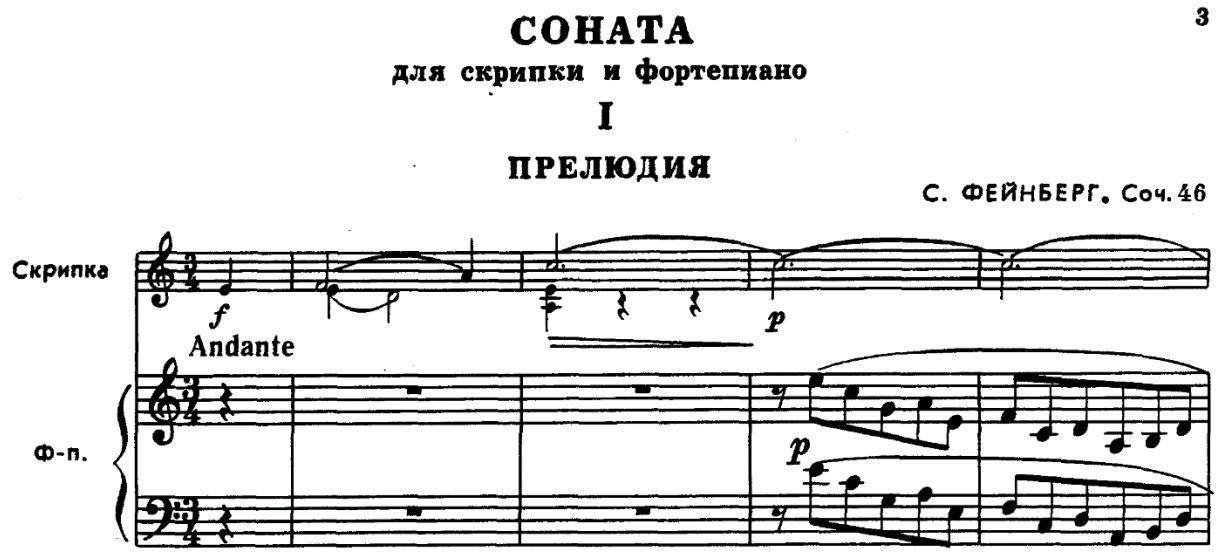
[3] Likhacheva, 112-113.
[4] Ibid., 112.

The Second Violin Sonata, Op. 46 is a large five-movement work which is largely ignored in the Feinberg literature. The fact the Feinberg turned to this genre and chamber music in general at this stage of his life is characteristic of his late style: the combination of the piano alongside a melodic instrument allowed him to delve into previously unexplored combinations of sounds and textures which can emphasize a melodic voice, while still retaining many of his idiosyncratic textures and harmonies. The use of different instrumentation also welcomes countless new possibilities of contrasts, one of the most significant aspects of his late period.

Feinberg's first attempt at a violin sonata was in 1912, during the years after his graduation from the Moscow Conservatory and before his service on the Polish front during the First World War. The piece was never completed and appears to have been lost or possibly destroyed. This second violin sonata comes from 1955-56, a few years after completion of his Eleventh Piano Sonata. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the sonata comes from only a short time after his friend Prokofiev (and Stalin's) death in 1953 – Feinberg along with David Oistrakh played the first and third movements of Prokofiev's Second Violin Sonata at Prokofiev's funeral.[5]

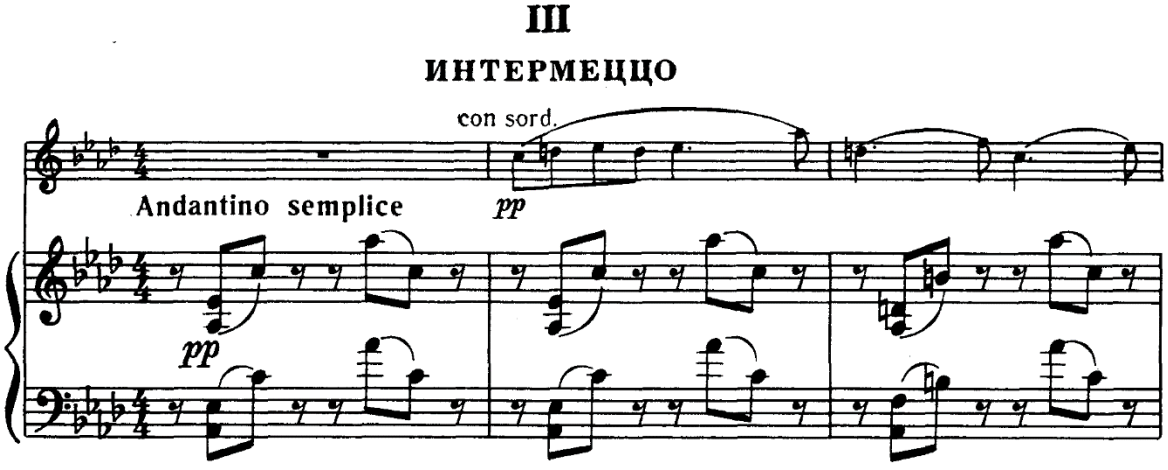
Feinberg's Second Violin Sonata is in five movements of varying length. The first four movements are highly contrasting, while the finale (titled Epilog) combines fragments of themes from all previous movements. Throughout the work, violinist and pianist are treated equally, as both players quickly swap roles with one another. There is also a new-found simplicity in Feinberg's writing, which is apparent in the opening measures:

[5] Simon Morrison, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 278.



Example 4.8 Feinberg Second Violin Sonata, Mov. 1, mm. 1 – 4.

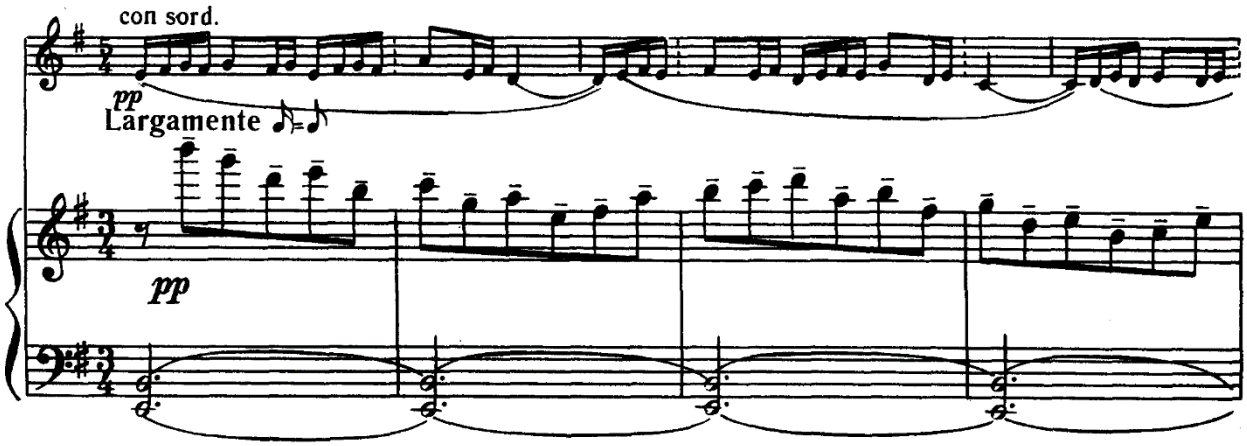
Although at its climaxes the music becomes very dense, textures remain clear throughout almost all the sonata, mostly due to Feinberg's treatment of roles; the two instruments frequently swap, so that rarely at one time are both performers playing melodic content. The role of the pianist is very often textural or rhythmic, and less contrapuntal than in previous works. This reduction of counterpoint is reminiscent of several of his middle-period compositions. Another technique Feinberg uses to achieve clarity throughout the sonata is the introduction of simple textural accompaniments before the arrival of melodic content. Whereas before, much of Feinberg's music could be considered layers of overlapping counterpoint, here roles are clearly laid out and focus is immediately drawn to the melody when it enters:



Example 4.9 Feinberg Second Violin Sonata, Mov. 3, mm. 1 – 3.

There are also passages in the violin sonata which are highly repetitive and almost trance-like, a new quality unique to the music of Feinberg's late period. The above *Andantino semplice* third movement has pages of very similar slow-moving patterns repeated with very little harmonic motion. The opening *Prelude* movement also shares this quality to some extent.

Variety and contrast are achieved throughout the sonata by alternating melodic with rhythmic movements. In the fourth movement, the construction of the entire work becomes apparent, as an extended version of the third movement melody is combined with the eighth-note accompanimental texture of the first movement:



Example 4.10 Feinberg Second Violin Sonata, Mov. 4, mm. 133 – 137.

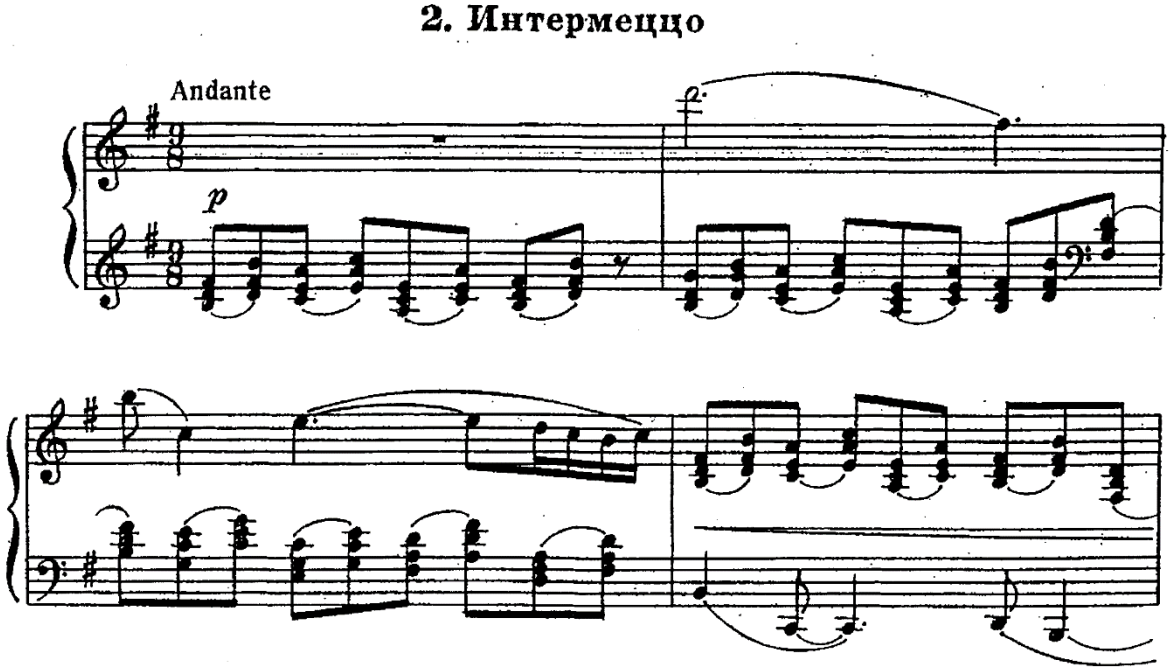
The coda of the fifth movement seems to summarize the entire piece, by recalling melodic fragments from previous movements. This motivic interrelationship between movements suggests a large-scale organic construction, similar to the monothematic approach of his early works.

Feinberg's final piano sonata, his Twelfth, was completed shortly before his death in 1962. The piece is in three movements titled *Sonatina*, *Intermezzo*, and *Improvisation*. The structure of the piece could possibly be inspired by his friend Anatoly Alexandrov's Seventh Piano Sonata, which Feinberg was known to have admired very much (which has movements titled *Sonatina, Canzona,* and *Rondo*). The

moderate difficulty of the piece, as well as the title *Sonatina* could reveal an intended pedagogical use for the sonata.[6]

The piece alternates between several sections of very clear melodic-focused writing idiomatic of his middle period with the more coloristic writing from his early style. The first movement is a traditional sonata form with a written-out expositional repeat. Textures are sparse, and note values are curiously almost exclusively limited to quarter and eighth note values throughout the entirety of the movement.

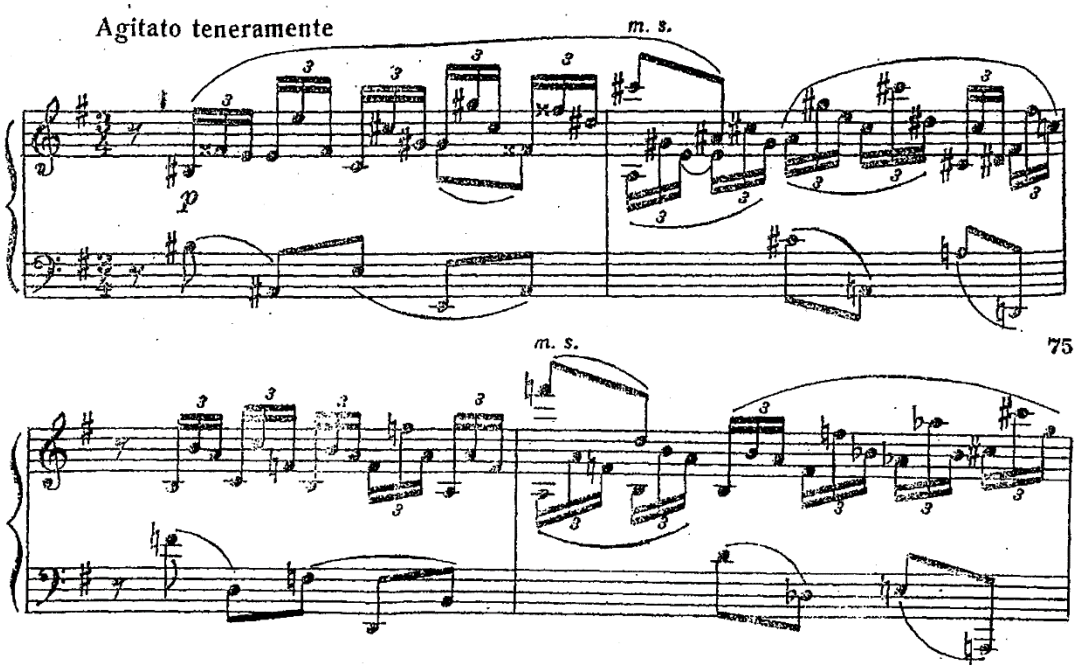
The second movement *Intermezzo* is another clear example of Feinberg's late style – the extreme contrast or juxtaposition of ideas; especially the contrast of clarity with obscurity, or melodic with textural. The movement begins with a technique found in the violin sonata - establishing an accompanimental texture in anticipation of a melody, akin to that of an aria or nocturne. Although the melody passes into the bass register, the introduction establishes clarity of function:



Example 4.11 Feinberg Twelfth Sonata, Mov. 2, mm. 1 – 4.

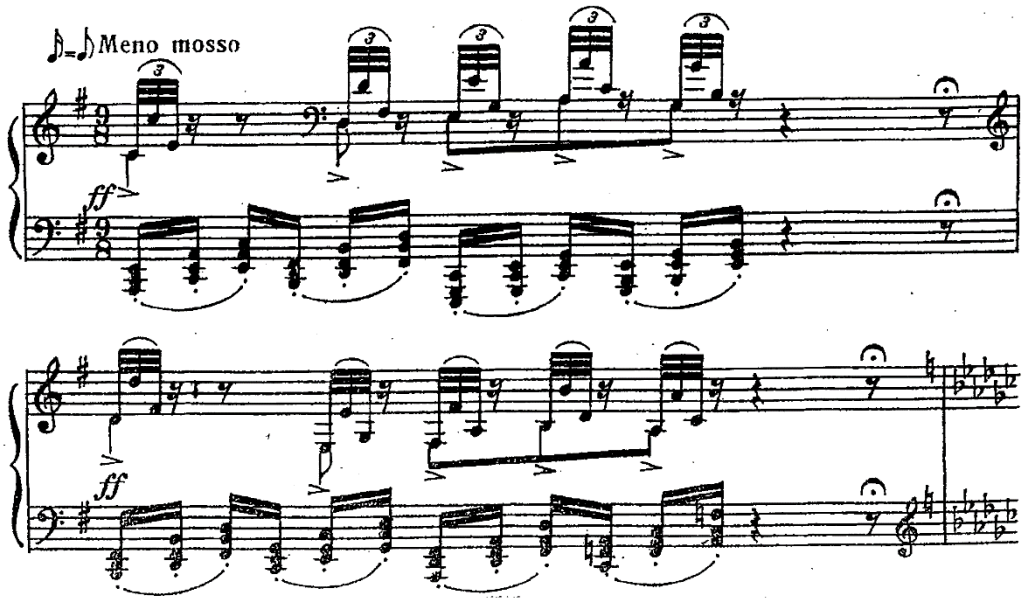
[6] Likhacheva, 114.

The first eleven measures of the movement are completely diatonic and devoid of accidentals. After a brief transition, the *Agitato teneramente* middle section reprises some of the more frenetic writing of his early style combined with atonal coloristic harmonic language, in complete juxtaposition to the opening material:



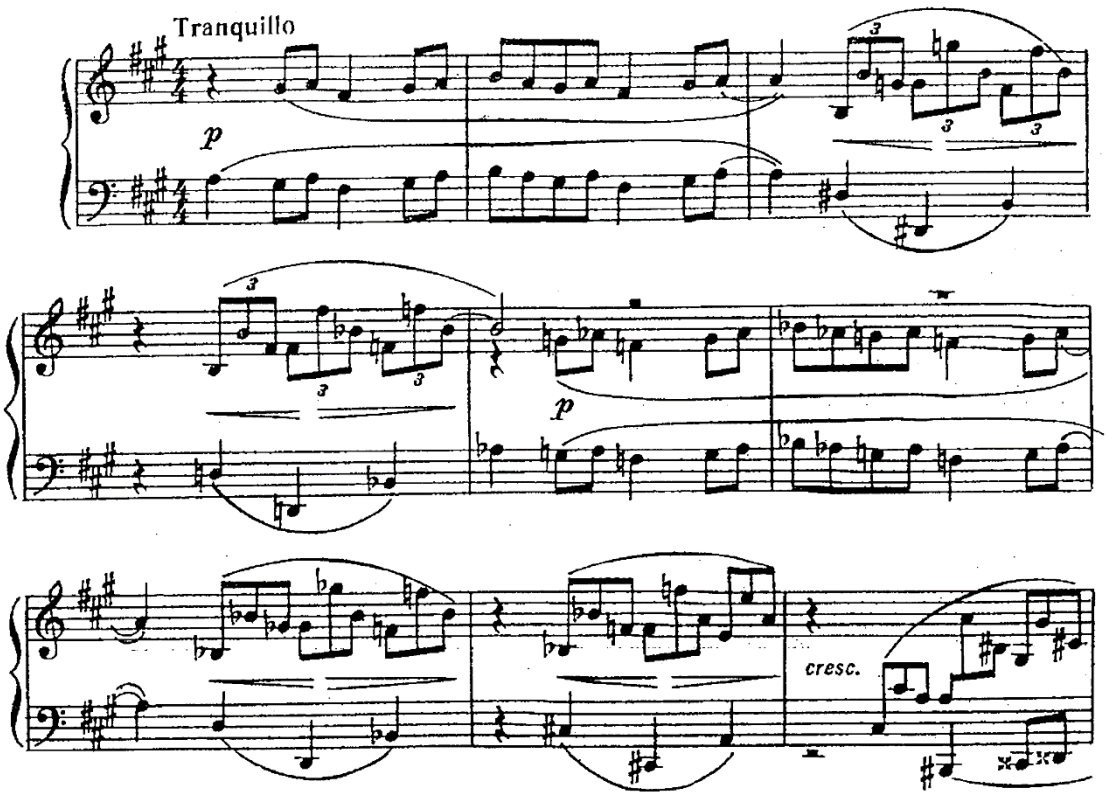
Example 4.12 Feinberg Twelfth Sonata, Mov. 2, mm. 15 – 18.

Just as in the second movement of the Third Concerto, Feinberg attempts to reconcile these two contrasting forces in the recapitulation. Here he combines the accompanying chordal texture of the opening with the figuration of the middle section. However, whereas in the concerto the two contrasting forces met in a synthesis, here the combination of elements suggests a more violent union:



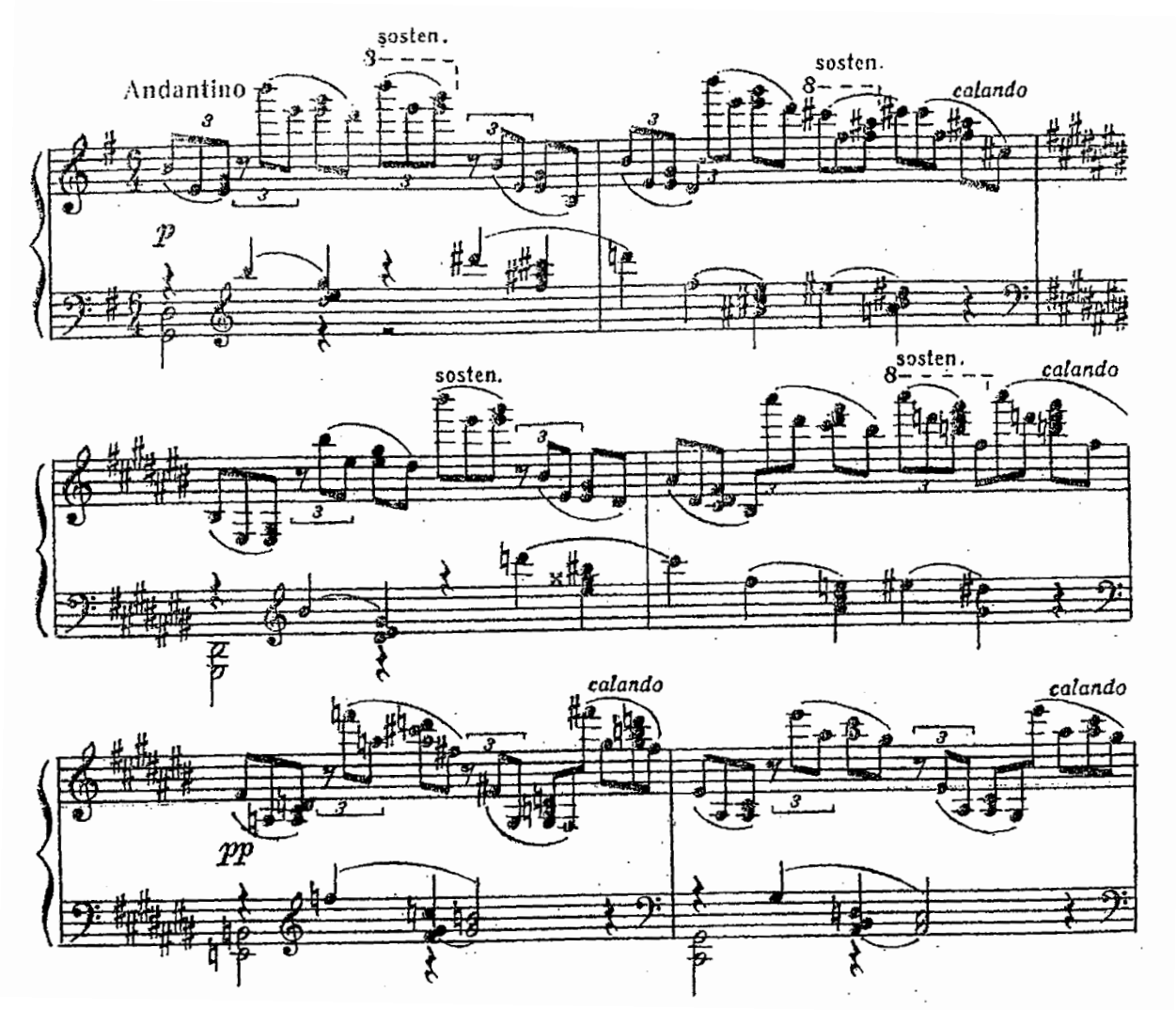
Example 4.13 Feinberg Twelfth Sonata, Mov. 2, mm. 34 – 35.

The final *Improvisation* movement combines several elements of Feinberg's late period. The movement begins with a solemn two-measure unison F-sharp minor melody and is immediately followed by coloristic figuration. The material alternates between melodic and textural, passing through several disparate tonal areas, eventually combining the two elements. The unison melody is almost certainly a quote of Brahms' Intermezzo Op. 117 No. 3:



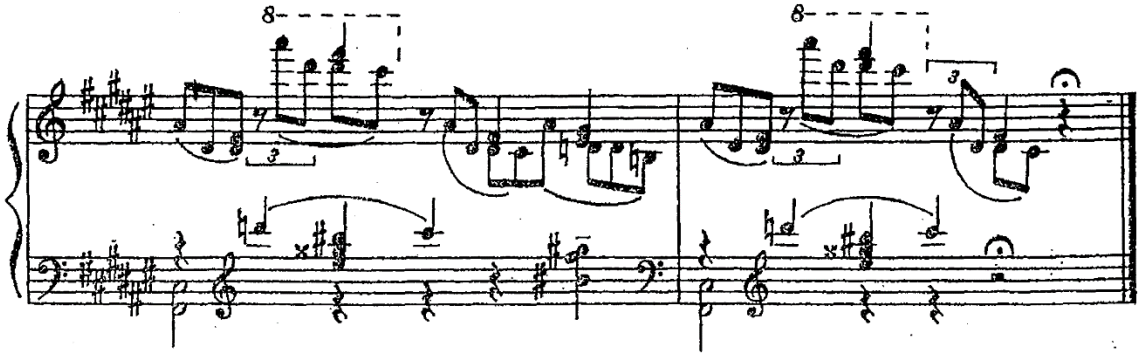
Example 4.14 Feinberg Twelfth Sonata, Mov. 3, mm. 1 – 9.

The second theme group of the sonata is a clear window into Feinberg's early Scriabinesque works. The music immediately becomes more meditative and coloristic, slowing to an *Andantino* and passing through a variety of interesting harmonies and tonal areas, reaching into the upper-most register of the piano. Here Feinberg also saturates the score with several *sostenuto* and *calando* markings, another hallmark of his early style:



Example 4.15 Feinberg Twelfth Sonata, Mov. 3, mm. 31 – 36

The coda of the piece returns to this meditative theme, and as if drifting away, the piece quietly ends in a wash of F-sharp Major:



Example 4.16 Feinberg Twelfth Sonata, Mov. 3, mm. 79 – 80.

Feinberg's late style is best characterized by extreme juxtaposition of contrasting elements. Often in his late works he will contrast several of the elements of his middle period with a rehashing of elements from his early style. A sense of dynamism is apparent in all the late works, as the music quickly fluctuates between compositional styles. This dynamism extends to all aspects of the music: harmonic stability vs. instability, melodic vs. textural - contrasts of register, figuration, tonalities, and tempo. By the end of his life Feinberg was working with an expanded palette of sounds, textures, and ideas, all of which converge in his final works.

Conclusion

Over the course of his seventy-two-year life, the music of Samuil Yevgenyevich Feinberg underwent several evolutions. His earliest works composed shortly after his return to Moscow from World War One were very Scriabinesque in nature; colorful works that pushed the boundaries of pianistic technical abilities, often very dense and filled with counterpoint. Feinberg, one of the most accomplished pianists of his time, was drawn to the music of Scriabin and himself performed all ten of Scriabin's sonatas in concerts regularly. Feinberg's early works were often constructed with small motivic cells, which permeate the often very dense contrapuntal textures of his earliest pieces, the Sixth Sonata being the most complex example. These early works also featured an emphasis on figuration and harmony over melodic content: Feinberg's early melodies were often fragmented and angular, favoring harmonic interests over melodic contour.

The failure of his First Piano Concerto in 1932, along with the rise of the Communist Party influenced a large-scale shift in compositional style which began to manifest in his music beginning in the early-to-mid 1930s. Feinberg began to compose far less frequently, perhaps for fear of the scrutiny placed upon artists in the Soviet Union. Feinberg, perhaps wisely, also withheld publishing many of his works which he felt would not be received well, including his seventh and eighth sonatas. The music from this period reveals a shift toward clarity – textures are clearer, and there is almost always strong diatonic melodic content. Harmonic function also becomes clearer, and tonality is usually more grounded than in previous works. Pianistically, the music from this time is far more approachable, and Feinberg began to emphasize miniature genres such as songs and less substantial piano pieces, perhaps an attempt to tailor his music for public consumption.

The 1947 completion of his Third Piano Concerto, along with the unfortunate 1948 "subjective" branding of his fourth, fifth, and sixth piano sonatas by the Communist Party mark the beginning of Feinberg's final compositional period. Feinberg's late style can best be summarized as a synthesis of his

previous two styles, alongside the extreme juxtaposition of contrasting elements. This juxtaposition of contrasting elements results in strong sense of dynamism which permeates the late works. Often in the late works Feinberg pits several elements of his previous two styles against one another and rapidly fluctuates between styles for maximum effect. There is also an emergence of a more simplistic, almost meditative style which is unique to his late period, which is typically formed by use of slow repetitive patterns over static harmonies.

Feinberg's music is still largely unknown in the West. This is likely the result of several reasons, but the largest being the rise of the Communist Party in Russia. Feinberg, who began to pique curiosity across Europe in the mid-1920s with his tours of Germany, was restricted from leaving the country beginning in the 1930s. He spent his remaining years in Moscow teaching at the Conservatory behind the Iron Curtain, where he enjoyed a good reputation, but went largely unknown outside of Russia until recent years.

Bibliography

Books and Articles

Asaf'ev, Bori Vladimirovich. *Russian Music from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*. Ann Arbor: Published for American Council of Learned Societies, 1953.

Bakst, James. *A History of Russian-Soviet Music*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977.

Barnes, Christopher. *The Russian Piano School: Russian Pianists and Moscow Conservatorie Professors on the Art of the Piano*. London: Kahn & Averill, 2007.

Bowers, Faubian. *The New Scriabin: Enigma and Answers*. New York: St. Marin's Press, 1973.

Bunin, Viktor, *Samuil Evgen'evich Feĭnberg: Zhizn' i Tvorchestvo.* Moscow: "Muzyka", 1999.

Cannaugh, Lionel. *Soviet Musical Policy and Its Effect on Soviet Music*. Silver Spring, MD. (814 Hillsboro Dr., Silver Spring 20902): Shazco, 1998

Dubal, David. *The Art of the Piano: its Performers, Literature, and Recordings*. 3rd ed. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co., 2005.

Eichner, Solomon. "The Life and Legacy of Samuil Feinberg." DMA diss., University of South Carolina, 2017.

Engel, Carl. "Views and Reviews." *The Musical Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (1924): 622-33. http://www.jstor.org.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/stable/738478.

Feinberg, Samuil. *Pianism kak Iskusstvo* [Pianism as an Art]. Ed by L.E. Feinberg and V.A. Natanson. Moscow: Musika, 1969.

Fuksman, Mark. "The Toll of Time: Samuil Feinberg's Sonata No. 6." DMA diss., Arizona State University, 2010.

Gerogievskaya, Liudmila. "A Performer's Guide to Samuil Feinberg's Sonata No. 6: A Window into Russian Pianism." DMA diss,. University of North Texas, 2017.

Ho, Allan and Feofanov, Dmitry. *A Biographical Dictionary of Russian/Soviet Composers*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989

Hull, Eaglefield A. *A Great Russian Tone-Poet: Scriabin*. New York: AMS Press, 1918.

Likhacheva, Inrina. *S.E. Feĭnberg: Pianist, Kompositor, Issledovatel'.* Moscow: Sovietskiy kompozitor, 1984.

Morrison, Simon. *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Nelson, Amy. *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia*. University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004.

--------- "The Struggle for Proletarian Music: RAPM and the Cultural Revolution." *Slavic Review* 59, No. 1 (2000): 101-32.

Paperno, Dmitry. *Notes of a Moscow Pianist*. Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1998.

Powell, Jonathan. *After Scriabin: Six Composers and the Development of Russian Music*. PhD diss., [microfilm manuscript] Cambridge: Cambridge University Library, 1999.

--------- "Feinberg, Samuil." *Grove Music Online*. 2 September, 2018. 2001.

Rimm, Robert. *The Composer-Pianists: Hamelin and the Eight*. Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 2002.

Roberts, Peter Deane. *Modernism in Russian Piano Music: Skriabin, Prokofiev, and Their Russian Contemporaries, Vol. 1*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.

--------- *Modernism in Russian Piano Music: Skriabin, Prokofiev, and Their Russian Contemporaries, Vol. 2*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.

Sabaneyeff, Leonid. *Modern Russian Composers*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1975, c1927.

Schwarz, Boris. *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.

Sirodeau, Christophe, John G. Papaïoannou, and Alain Poirier. *Cycle Skalkottas, Paris, 1998-1999: sur Nikos Skalkottas, 1904-1949, sur Samuil Feinberg, 1890-1962: catalogues de leurs oeuvres, programmes des 10 concerts, [Paris, 16 décembre-22 novembre 1999]*. [Paris] (3 rue Meynadier, 75019): AIFS.

Sirodeau, Christope. Liner notes to *Feinbergs – Piano Sonatas, Nos. 1-6*. BIS Records 7318590014134. CD. 2003.

Sitsky, Larry. *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Guarde, 1900-1929*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994.

Sokolova, M. D. *Samuil Feĭnberg, 1890-1962: 120 Let So Dn͡ia Rozhdeniĭa.*Moskva: Moskovskai͡a konservatoriĭa, 2011.

Taruskin, Richard. *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Woolsey, Timothy. "Organizational Principles in Piano Sonatas of Alexander Scriabin." DMA Diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1977.

Scores and Recordings

Bach, Mozart. Russian Piano School: Samuil Feinberg. Melodiya, B000001HBU, 1996. Audio CD

Bach, J.S. Samuel Feinberg: Russian Piano School: Johann Sebastian Bach, Well- Tempered Clavier, Book 1 & 2. Talents of Russia, B000027PG7. Audio CD.

Feinberg, Samuil. Samuil Feinberg: Piano Sonatas Nos. 1-6. Niokolaos Samaltanos and Christopher Sirodeau. BIS Records, B0000WWQ9Q, 2001. Audio CD.

Feinberg, Samuil. Samuil Feinberg: Piano Sonatas Nos. 7-12. Niokolaos Samaltanos and Christopher Sirodeau. BIS Records, B0001GAMME, 2004. Audio CD.

Feinberg, Samuil. *Sochinenija dlia Fortepiano* [Works for Piano], vol. 1. Sonatas 1-4, edited by V.A. Natanson. Moscow: Sovetskiy Kompositor, 1974.

Feinberg, Samuil. *Sochinenija dlia Fortepiano* [Works for Piano], vol. 2. Sonatas 5-9, edited by V.A. Natanson. Moscow: Sovetskiy Kompositor, 1978.

Feinberg, Samuil. *Sochinenija dlia Fortepiano* [Works for Piano], vol. 3. Sonatas 10-12, edited by V.A. Natanson. Moscow: Sovetskiy Kompositor, 1980.

Feinberg, Samuil. Sechste Sonate für Klavier, op. 13. Vienna; New York: Universal Edition, 1925.

Feinberg, Samuil. *Suite No. 2: for Piano, Op. 25*. Moskva: Muzyka, 2008.

Feinberg, Samuel. *Second Concerto for Piano, Op. 36*. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe muzykal′noe izdatel′stvo, 1946.

Feinberg, Samuil. *Piano Concerto No. 3, Op. 44*. Moskva: Sovetskij kompozitor, 1961.

Feinberg, Samuil. *Sonata for Violin and Piano*. Moskva: Sovetskij kompozitor, 1976.

Electronic Sources

Powell, Jonathan. “Feinberg, Samuil.” *Grove Music Online*, 2001. Accessed September 2, 2018. http:////www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000041242.

Sirodeau, Christophe. "Samuil Feinberg Biography." International Feinberg Skalkottas Society. Accessed September 2, 2018. http://www.skfe.com/aifs/aifs/biog_en_feinberg_sirodeau.html

Wiright, David. “Samuil Feinberg.” Accessed September 2, 2018. https://www.wrightmusic.net/pdfs/samuil-feinberg.pdf